BOYS TO MEN: MOTIVATING ELDERS TO DEVELOP A RITES OF PASSAGE PROGRAM FOR YOUNG BLACK MALES

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ABSTRACT

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This ministry project was designed to evaluate the rites-of-passages' program at Mount Pisgah Baptist Church in Dayton, Ohio. The problem was the context did not have a positive male role model during early formation of spiritual, physical, and emotional development. The hypothesis was the absence of a strong man in the home could be resolved to a degree by a rites-of-passage program. The methodology used to measure the project was surveys, personal interviews, pre-and post-tests, Bible studies, and journals. Because of this project model, men became actively involved in the development of boys to men rites-of-passage program for the church.

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The writer extend a very special thanks to his two friends in ministry, Reverend Eddie Fleming and Reverend Andre Ivy for their time, devotion, accountability, constant support, and assistance in working closely with him throughout the entire D.Min. process. He would also like to thank Mount Pisgah Baptist Church for their support, and in particular, the entire men's ministry and elders for being supportive of the project. He also wants to thank Dr. Kerry Bryant for affording him the opportunity not only to implement the project, but for also offering this writer strategic leadership training.

Lastly, the writer would like to thank his loving wife, Tamera, and his wonderful children: Rachel and Gene for being patient with and loving him, even when he could not always be there with them.

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my father, Gene Bearden Moore, Sr., who always supported and encouraged me to complete my destiny. This project is also dedicated to Gene B. Moore III and to all Black males of the twenty-first century.

INTRODUCTION

Within the Afro-Baptist Church community, there exists a serious plight concerning the future and destiny of young Black males, where this writer suggests that older Black males could aid in remedying this situation through a Rites-of-Passage program. In this section, this writer introduces the project by providing one experience from the spiritual autobiography that includes an event that is to be associated with what occasioned this endeavor.

During the fall of 2008, as a result of a spiritual formation process, this writer selected a project to motivate Black males by mentoring, teaching, and volunteering, ultimately making a trip back to Ohio to teach and serve at Wilberforce University. During this time, he was the Director of Christian Education for a church in Evansville, Indiana called Memorial Baptist Church, and he felt that God was going to give him a ministry opportunity to mentor older men.

In November 2008, God moved Moore to serve at Mount Pisgah Baptist Church, which would be the start of a new spiritual journey. During a Sunday morning service, he asked the male students he taught at Wilberforce University to attend Sunday service with him, as this was the Sunday morning when he felt compelled to join and serve at Mount Pisgah Baptist Church (MPBC).

The focus of this project is to identify and seek solutions for a positive role model during early formation of spiritual, physical, and emotional development among young

African American males. Bell Hooks suggest that one of the causes of this rage and its effects is due in part to the absence of a strong man in the home, as well as gambling, divorce, the absence of the church, or other community programs.[1] Because rage exists within young Black boys, they need the elders of the church to assist them with the development of ethical manhood qualities. Because this program is designed to promote positive advancement for our young males, a similar program could be developed for young Black girls that would parallel this model. This project addresses how the absence of a father (not being in the household) can be resolved to a degree by motivating elders to develop a Rites of Passage program in Mount Pisgah Baptist Church, where older males can learn their biblical responsibility concerning younger males.

For the most part, parents make the mistake of penalizing young Black children; Exodus 20:5 (NRSV) says, "You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me." For instance, the mother brings her child to church to give that child spiritual nurturing, but then the child is marginalized in the context of the Black church and society because there are no programs specifically designed for their development into men. The objective of this project is to develop a Rites-of-Passage program for training older Black males to provide leadership and take responsibility for younger male development. The expected outcome is that older men would be more involved in the lives of young Black males.

Chapter one describes the author's spiritual autobiography and the setting of this project: Mount Pisgah Baptist Church. The context provides information about the membership and the community in which it ministers. In Chapter one, moreover, the

[1]Bell Hooks, *We Real Cool: Black Men and Masculinity* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2004), 117.

researcher shares his personal journey and how God opened his eyes to the needs of the community. As part of his personal journey, the researcher reveals some high points in his life as well as some devastating moments. He talks about the people who helped make this road bearable to travel.

Chapter two describes and discusses the importance of men being mentors in the church and community. It discusses the components of effective characteristics for the Rites-of-Passage program. In this chapter, the author will present a narrative analysis of literature by other authors and its relevance to the project. The literature that is presented will focus on the area of Rites of Passage in the church and community.

Chapter three presents the theological and biblical foundation for the characteristics for the Rites of Passage model. This foundation is important to provide the backing and grounds for this project model. The theological, biblical, and historical foundations on character, authority, attitude of nurture, and responsibility create an atmosphere for helping older men teach younger men how to develop manhood qualities in a Rites of Passage program.

Chapter four gives a review of the methodology and ministry model that was used at Mount Pisgah Baptist Church. In this chapter, the reader will discover the spiritual principles that were followed, the goals, the structure, and the implementation of the process.

Chapter five explains what occurred during the actual implementation of the project. It discusses the compilation of data and how it was collected, analyzed, and distributed.

In Chapter six, the researcher summarizes and reflects on the project, its implementation and overall results. The appendix has examples of the surveys, personal interviews, journals, and Bible studies used in this project. Finally, a bibliography is also provided.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

In this ministry focus, the author will discuss the area of ministry, the purpose of this project, and some insights for this project. The author will also discuss his spiritual autobiography, context, and synergy, which will set the context for the project model used at Mount Pisgah Baptist Church.

This project will discuss the absence of a father from the household and a partial resolution by motivating elders to develop a Rites-of-Passage program in Mount Pisgah Baptist Church where older males can learn some historical, theological, and biblical characteristics to be used in the formation of young Black males. The Black church, for the most part, is not helping with Rites-of-Passage for Black men, and Black male children are being penalized for the mistakes of their parents. Mother's bring their children to church to give them spiritual nurturing, but the Black male child is marginalized and ignored in the context of the Black church. The objective of this project is to help develop a Rites-of-Passage program for males. The expected outcome is that older males would be more involved in designing a Rites-of-Passage program.

When this writer was asked to do this assignment, he was a little apprehensive, yet excited to delve into and share with others, his spiritual relationship with God. He was apprehensive because as he reflects on his life, he knows that there are situations he is not proud of. The thought of going back and examining those periods makes him feel uncomfortable. As he continued to read and understand the assignment, however, he

began really to understand its importance. Writing his Spiritual Autobiography allowed the writer the opportunity to take note of the wonderful experiences he shared with God over the years. He was excited because he knew that this experience would allow him to do some self-examination and to appreciate God in God's entire splendor.

To do the assignment, the writer decided that the best way to express his thoughts was to divide his life periods into the following periods: Early Childhood (ages 0-11), Adolescence (12-17), Young adulthood (18-25), and late Twenties/Early Thirties (26-32). He selected these periods in his life for several reasons. For instance, during his childhood years, he can remember several moments where he had his first encounters with God. During this period, he remembered his first prayer and going to Sunday school. During his adolescent years, he remembers going through the physical and psychological stages of life and how God helped him through it all. His young adult years were a time of transition, educational experiences, and developing new relationships. Lastly, the later years of his life to the present have been a period of renewal. It is his hope that going back and examining these periods will bring about healing and spiritual growth.

In reflection, this writer's early childhood years were a time of firsts. He remembers at the ages of three to four years old, he would stay with his grandparents in Sorrell, Louisiana for the summer. It was then that he had his first experience with God. His grandfather taught him his first prayer and explained to him who God was and why it was important to pray. He really did not understand it at the time, but it was exciting for him, and he took it very seriously. He remembers his grandparents having conversation in the early morning that was what prayer was to him, a conversation with God. He also remembers going to Sunday school every week. It was like being in school but learning

about a man named Jesus. He was very curious and excited to know about God, and he really enjoyed going.

Going to Sunday school made him feel good and made him aware that there was someone who loved him no matter what and that was comforting to him. That comfort he felt was an experience with God. Early in his childhood, Gene was baptized on Easter. Once informed of the process of baptism, he knew that a change and something special was taking place in his life. He was graduating from learning about Jesus to being one of his disciples. It was also very important to him that his family attended church together. He felt lucky to know that he had support from his family and God.

As this writer developed, he was allowed to live with his grandparents while attending first grade. He did not do well in the first grade, resulting in him returning to live with his parents in Texas. This transition made him sad, angry, and hurt. These were two different environments. In Sorrell, the environment was very rural, and because his grandparents had very little education, they could not help him with his schoolwork. He was accustomed to getting his way, but at home things were very structured. He now understands, however, why this happened. The grace of God interceded preventing him from being educationally deficient because his parents were educated.

During his adolescence years, he experienced both physical and psychological changes. He was always a lot smaller than other kids, so he was harassed and bullied in school. This bothered him; so to deal with it, he got into one fight. He remembers after the fight he that he went home and prayed about the situation. After he prayed, he felt better. He was an introvert, so he had many conversations with God; it was his only outlet.

After high school, Moore joined the Navy. While in boot camp, he had another encounter with God. Before he left for the military, a family friend shared some wisdom with him. She explained to him that he was going to encounter many new things. She said that the way to get through was reading the word of God, preferably the book of Psalms. Gene took her advice; every night before he went to bed he would read a Psalm. This was his first experience actually reading the word of God.

During his time in boot camp, he learned to get along with all types of people, no matter their race, background, or religious belief. He was amazed at how the military took a group of unrelated people and created a team that worked together no matter what the circumstances. It was like brotherhood. When it came to combat, they were family. It was then that he learned that God is everywhere. God loves individuals for who they are on the inside.

During chapel services, this writer learned that there were different denominations and different types of worship. Even though people had different faiths, they were still praising God. He remembers when he was at his worst; God continued to send people his way to help keep him strong. For example, in order to graduate with his class, he would have to pass his final exam. He remembers worrying about not passing; however, his shipmates got together, studied, and prayed. Without a doubt, they all passed the test.

His time in the military helped him to understand what it meant to have an encounter with God. During earlier years, he knew that there was someone out there who watched over him, but in the military, he really learned what it meant to experience God. He had made it through boot camp. It was a sense of accomplishment, and he knows he would not have made it without knowing God.

After this writer graduated from boot camp, the years started to pass. He continued to strengthen his relationship with Christ. He not only read the entire book of Psalms, he also read the entire Bible. One night, while visiting a friend and in the midst of prayer, he had a Saul-like experience. It was revealed to him that he would bring a lot of young people to Christ. It became clear to him that he had to change his focus. He had to start living to serve God. When he reached the end of his fourth year in the military, he decided not to re-enlist. His heart was no longer with the military. He was not a solider for the Navy. He had become a solider for the Lord.

After leaving the military, this writer decided to enter American Baptist College. It was there he met his first wife. They dated four months and decided to get married. After graduating from American Baptist College, he entered Colgate Rochester Divinity School located in Rochester, New York. His wife, at the time, transitioned with him. He had trouble financially and academically. It was also at this time that his grandmother died, and his marriage was falling apart for several reasons. They stayed married for seven years. During this time, they experienced several points of difficulty, causing them to dissolve the marriage. He felt alone and found himself feeling very depressed. This felt like a time of death. This was his crisis. This was like his ninth grade experience all over again. He eventually had to make the decision to leave Colgate Rochester Divinity School and enter Payne Theological Seminary in Wilberforce, Ohio.

While making the transition from Colgate to Payne, he experienced God afresh. It was his resurrection. He could be accepted right away. He was able to meet with close friends and had the chance to meet new ones. He felt like he was getting himself back together. During this time, he decided to join a fraternity, Phi Beta Sigma. It was during

this time that he was able to meet new friends, which was good for him since he was in a new place and had no family within several miles. Joining Sigma was a great experience for him, especially since this new organization was responsible for him meeting his second wife. He also got the chance to meet a great man of God, Dr. Louis Jones. He was able to get a job as the student associate at McKinley United Methodist Church. Again, he had made it through his crisis and felt whole again. After spending two years at Payne Theological Seminary, Gene decided to transfer to United Theological Seminary.

The year of 2005 was a year of renewal for him. On May 28, 2005, he was married to his second wife. This time, he had grown spiritually. He now had more patience; he was a better communicator and was going to be a better husband than before. He felt like God gave him a second chance, and he was going for it. He had another experience with God by experiencing the birth of his first child. Before his child was born, Gene had a vision from God. God spoke to him and said that the baby would be a boy. He was so ecstatic. People had their own thoughts, but he knew what God had revealed to him. Sure enough, on October 10, 2005, Gene B. Moore III was born. During the birth, his wife had some difficulty. This ended with her having a C-Section. For this reason, when his son was born, he got the chance to hold him first. Even though his wife had the chance to carry the child, he felt an experience with God precisely because he was the first to hold him. A child is truly a miracle from God.

Seven months after the birth of his son, he and his wife moved to Evansville, Indiana. His wife received the center manager's position with ZLB Plasma Services. She was unemployed for several months before and after the birth of their son. They went through a hardship due to her previous employment; she was fired. They had no medical

insurance so they had to apply for WIC services through the state. The experience for them was very humbling, and they have become very sympathetic towards others who were going through the same situation. They were both excited to move to Evansville, Indiana, with their newborn son and with new beginnings as a new family.

The University of Southern Indiana was located a couple miles from his apartment housing. He was turned down for a couple of jobs in the area and went without work for three to four months. He felt discouraged staying at home at the time because he was used to working and going to school. His wife was the only one working at the time. He did not want to leave the job in Dayton, Ohio because the grant cycle was about to begin.

The timing was bad, yet his wife was unemployed and eager to return to work. He had promised that if the opportunity came for her to take a manager's position, he would go, so he kept his promise to his wife. He was able to spend time with his son. He did not see himself staying home for long, as he was anxious to get back to work. He saw the value of staying at home with his son at the time, but as a father and husband, he struggled with not contributing to the family financially.

He and his family found a church home in Evansville, Indiana at Memorial Baptist Church. Lynel Beatty, whom he met at Payne Theological Seminary, led him to the church. Reverend Adrian Brooks, the Pastor of the church, is the brother of Lynel. God works in mysterious ways. She told him to go to Memorial Baptist Church, and he would take care of him and his family. He was intimidated about going due to the long list of ministers attending the church. He looked at the website to find out more

information about the church and wondered where he would fit in. The church already had many of the ministry positions filled at the time.

The family went together for several weeks and observed the ministry. They loved the service from week-to-week. They finally decided to join the church as a family. Memorial Baptist church became their new family. He and his family attended New Members class together for four weeks. After New Members class, they immediately started working in the church.

The job he was currently looking for came through the church. He was volunteering his time at the church even though he was unemployed. One day at a worship meeting, a church member told him about job at Earle C. Clements Job Corps Academy. Pat told him to send her his resume through e-mail, and she would get back with him as soon as possible. About two weeks later, she told Gene to go fill out an application because God had gone before him to prepare the way.

In August 2006, Gene started the new job as instructor in the Career Preparation Period for construction students in Morganfield, Kentucky, working with young men and women between the age's eighteen to twenty-four years old. He moved from the classroom to management within a couple of months. Pat Carson is the reason for the Job Corps experience. He was to share his intellect, mind, and knowledge of higher education with her. She was thirsting for education dealing with ministry. She wanted to do her master's degree in ministry but needed the encouragement to do so. She listened and actively made ministry a priority in her life. She has traveled the world recording numerous gospel songs. She is a great worship leader, yet thirsted for more from her spiritual father in the preaching ministry. She desires to pastor a church one-day.

Later on that year, this writer received a letter from the military saying that he was being dropped from the Chaplain Candidate program for failure to comply with the obligation to be activated to active duty or reserves. He prayed and meditated on the situation and felt he had put too much time in the military to let the program go. He immediately made contact with the program director to get back in compliance with active duty training over the summer months. He still wrestled with the thought of going back to active duty while staying in the church context.

The balance of two parents in management and working schedules was beginning to take a toll on Gene and his wife's parenting skills. Gene III was currently in daycare but as parents, this writer and his wife were not seeing much of their son. His wife started to feel guilty because she was unable to see him as much. Reverend Vicki Rouse introduced them to her mother-in-law, Mrs. Rouse, who then would take care of Gene III if they were unable to pick him up from daycare in time.

He felt he gained enough experience from Job Corps to move to the next level of independence. The care of his son and time spent with him as parents was of more value as a family. He decided to apply for Youth Build, located closer to home, which was located in Evansville, Indiana. He had a desire to learn more skills about grant writing, youth programs, and construction perhaps to be able to learn the trade. The opportunity allowed for more growth in ministry through different management positions. He struggled with looking at the different positions held in Job Corps as ministry shared by his supervisors.

Youth Build gave him the opportunity to connect socially and civically with people in the city of Evansville. Leadership Evansville was the best opportunity for him

to learn leadership development. He and his colleagues were able to take their students through the program. Tim Martin Director of Capital Funds became his role model and another model for ministry to add to the idea of the Community Development Corporation. Bob Sikes Supervisor and Chris Clayton Supervisor were great carpenters. They had the opportunity to build Habitat for Humanity homes in the Evansville area. He was able to connect young people to civic leaders in their community. Young people were able to make effective changes within the community where they lived by building homes. He learned servant leadership through the Youth Build experience. This writer is grateful to Tim for the opportunity to serve young people.

The writer and his wife Tamera spiritually grew as a couple because they had to depend on one another and God. The Memorial Baptist church was his foundation as a man, pastor, and parent—socially, and most of all spiritually. This writer and Tamera grew together spiritually and were in ministry together. The pastor of the church trusted him with the supervision of fifty plus ministries.

He took on the role of teaching pastor. He would teach Bible study weekly, preach when the pastor was out of town, and he would lead the worship service.

The first year the pastor decided to take the Easter service to a bigger venue. Twenty-one souls were saved that Easter Sunday. He led the leadership of the church in developing different ministries, helping to plan, and to be accountable through policies and procedures. He sat on the nominating committee for ministry leaders, developed the Board of Christian Education, and taught the ministers leadership development. He felt he could have done a better job in developing the ministers, yet was not very successful.

The experiences above gave him a framework for his model of ministry. The ministry he most enjoyed was the Memorial Community Development Corporation and witnessed its manifestation. Memorial Baptist church had several components such as: daycare, senior housing, apartments, single-family homes, a Subway restaurant, and a health clinic. The most important program was the summer youth program. Youth from the community were hired to clean up the neighborhood for the summer. The supervisors were normally college students with other personnel from the church. From this experience, he experienced ministry on another level. The pastor taught him lots about ministry and is one of his role models.

In January 2008, a daughter was born. Being second-time parents proved to be a much easier process. He knew what to expect, and he had support from family, friends, and the church. God granted the family the two children they asked for before they got married: a boy and a girl. His wife stopped working before she conceived, allowing for her to be stress-free while carrying baby Rachel. Although they were highly blessed, the family continued to suffer the same financial storm, but God made a way. His wife had a second C-Section, and the delivery was smooth with neither problems nor complications. He was the first to hold Rachel, and she was a miracle to him just as her brother. Both of their children's spiritual foundation started in Memorial Baptist Church.

While working in ministry at Memorial, he received a phone call from a friend at the Chaplain Candidate Program in Newport Rhode Island where they earlier attended Chaplain School together in the summer of 2001. Chaplain John connected him back to Chaplaincy and has been this writer's mentor since Chaplain School in 2001. Chaplain Miyahara connected Gene with another one of his mentor's from Chaplain School,

Chaplain Miller in May of 2008. His obligation was to attend another on-the-job-training program before trying to apply for active duty. His training began in Atlanta, Georgia for one month under the instruction of Chaplain Miller. During his training, he visited various churches, Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC), and preached for chapel service. His travels consisted of returning to American Baptist College where ministry began for him.

Chaplain Miller received his Ph.D. in Nonprofit Organization and inspired this writer to go back to school. Through his relationship with Chaplain Miller, he was encouraged to read books such as *From the Hood to the Hill* by Chaplain Barry Black. This writer's relationships with other Reserve Chaplains became relevant in the process. His pastoral experience came from both active duty and reserve chaplaincy at the same time. His intent was to become involved with the Chaplain Corp again.

The pastor who blessed this writer while in Atlanta for the month was E. Dewey Smith Jr. From pastor Smith, Gene was involved in Bible study and Sunday Morning Worship. The teaching and preaching encouraged and challenged him to do better. From this experience, his discernment of God's guidance and understanding grew. His favorite sermon was entitled, "When God Frustrates You into Your Purpose." His whole focus was to understand the purpose for his life at the crossroads of life's decisions.

Upon this writer's return to Indiana, he met with the pastor and deacons who were overjoyed to see one another. At that moment, he felt like all his work in ministry was appreciated. His return from Atlanta began the process of ordination and preparing his active duty package for the Care Board.

After twelve long years, Gene's ordination took place May 2008, the same day his daughter was christened. The process of ordination was intellectually challenging for him; however, he realizes his growth over the years after being faithful to God. Pastor Brooks had lots to do with his spiritual growth as a father, husband, man, and pastor.

The Care Board denied him for active duty because of a lack of experience, but he accepted a job as Reserve Chaplain. His understanding was that God had something better for him at that time in his life.

In August 2008, this writer and his family moved back to Dayton, OH, where he accepted a job as to Academic Advising Coordinator at Wilberforce University. The decision to return home was a walk of faith for his family. During the morning of his arrival, he went to the office to work on schedules for freshman and transfer students.

During this time, Pastor Bryant was looking for a Director of Christian Education. Pastor Bryant met him in his office at Wilberforce University to share information and to get his résumé. Pastor Bryant and this writer had known each other for about ten years. Pastor Bryant called a few weeks later to follow-up on his decision about the position. The writer's response to him was that he was still in prayer about the position.

His first year at Wilberforce University included teaching College Strategies for freshman students. His challenge to his students was to develop spiritually. In November 2008, students of his class attended church with him at Mount Pisgah Baptist Church. His commitment to Mount Pisgah Baptist church started the day his students attended. God spoke to him about Mount Pisgah, and the vision of God came to pass seven years later.

The family had been participating faithfully in the church for three years when this writer was appointed Pastor of Faith Formation for about a year; the next year, he was appointed Pastor of Faith Formation and Ministry development. His current service is teaching leadership development to ministers in training. He and his wife work together at the church's second location in Huber Heights as Site Pastor and Site Coordinator. In order to accomplish his ministry as Site Pastor and Coordinator for Mount Pisgah, he became the Interim Pastor at Bethel Baptist Church in Dayton, Ohio. The Interim Pastor prepared him to plant a second site when Mount Pisgah was ready. Pastor Bryant encouraged the opportunity to help him grow in preparation for Pastoral ministry.

In conclusion, this writer's spiritual journey has been therapy for him. He was able to resolve issues and forgive himself for some of his early mistakes in life. He now can see just how much he has grown spiritually, and he knows that he still has a long way to go.

Ministry Context

Montgomery County was created on March 24, 1803 and was formed from Hamilton County. The County was named for General Richard Montgomery, an officer in the American Revolutionary War who led the army that captured Montreal. The County Seat is Dayton. The soil in the county is predominantly clay with limestone as a mineral resource. Montgomery County is located in western Ohio. It is predominantly rural, with seventeen percent of the county's 462 square miles consisting of urban areas.[1]

[1]Facts About Ohio, http://www.myohiogenealogy.com/oh_county/mty.htm, (accessed January 15, 2011).

Montgomery County flourished during the nineteenth century. With the completion of the Miami and Erie Canal in 1829, connecting Dayton to Cincinnati, the county residents thrived. In addition, nine turnpikes connected Dayton to other areas of the state. Because of its status as a transportation hub, Montgomery County was heavily involved in Ohio's early industrialization. By the late 1800s, the county had become the center of many types of industry.

There were many newspapers and journals that fueled the publishing industry. Many of these publications dealt with either religious issues or agricultural interests. Some examples include: *Christian World*, *Young Catholic Messenger*, *Ohio Bible Teacher*, as well as *Farmer's Home*, the *Ohio Swine Journal*, and the *Ohio Poultry Journal*. Many other industries were related to agriculture, including mills and numerous companies manufacturing farm implements. Among the best known in the nineteenth century was the Buckeye Mower and Reaper Company.

In the 1880s, John Patterson opened the National Cash Register Company in Dayton. When Ohio became a state in 1803, Dayton became the seat of Montgomery County. Beyond Dayton's initial growth, however, the town remained relatively small until the War of 1812. During this conflict, Dayton served as an embarkation point for American attacks on Canada and on British troops in the northwestern part of the United States. Both during and following the war, factories and mills quickly came into being, including a tobacco factory, textile mills, and several other establishments. Dayton boasted two banks by the 1810s as well. By the 1840s, Dayton was one of the largest and wealthiest communities in Ohio.

Dayton was heavily involved in Ohio's early industrialization. There were also German newspapers for the town's German settlers. The most famous literary figure from Dayton was Paul Laurence Dunbar. Widely acclaimed as the poet laureate of African Americans, Dunbar penned numerous novels and books of poetry in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth- centuries. The Ohio Historical Society currently maintains Dunbar's final home in Dayton as a state memorial.

In the twentieth century, Dayton continued to prosper. In the first decade, the city became known as the home of Wilbur and Orville Wright, the brothers who made the first successful airplane flight. Under the direction of the Holy Spirit, a small band of inspired people drew upon all the tolls of leadership, mission mindedness, Christian brotherhood and dedication to religious welfare to signal the creation of Mount Pisgah Missionary Baptist Church. In 1905, a small group of Christians, with an intense desire to worship God and organize a church on the east side of Dayton, gathered themselves together. For a few years before this date, the group worshiped as a mission church, being an extension of Zion Baptist. Under the guidance of the Mother Church, the group organized a church and named it Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church.

The first meetings were held with eight candidates being baptized. They marched boldly for nearly two miles, singing and praising the Lord. Harvey Johnson, the first pastor of the Church, led the procession. With a plan and focus for the future, Reverend Johnson and the membership signed a contract on January 2, 1907 to purchase a lot. On January 2, 1908, the Church moved from Brother Martin’s stable into a house they were renting at 142 E. Diamond Avenue. Reverend Johnson resigned a short time later.

On March 2, 1908, William Bridges was appointed Pastor. He initiated the plan to build a church. Some of the members of the building committee at that time were Brothers Hugh Hopey, W. Johnson, Sisters Mary Cooper, and E. Lewis. On June 4, 1908, a blessing was truly bestowed upon the church when the balance due on the lot was donated by M. S. Benn Realty Company (a branch of Dayton City Realty Company), and the deed was turned over to the community. On October 2, 1908, Reverend Bridges tendered his resignation and was given much praise and thanks by the membership for his faithful work.

On December 4, 1908, Reverend James Brown was called to Pastor the Church and remained in this position until 1913. During his pastorate, a very significant step was taken, which forever linked the Church's past to its future. A resolution was introduced and adopted on September 10, 1909 to change the name of the church to Mount Pisgah Missionary Baptist Church. Sometime during the period of 1912-1913, while Reverend Brown was still pastoring, the Church moved to 154 E. Diamond Street.

The Flood of 1913, which created significant loss of life and property in Dayton, temporarily halted the city's growth, but the people of Dayton quickly rebounded. During the Progressive Era of the late nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries, Dayton became a center of political reform. Rejecting the control of corrupt city bosses who manipulated politics to serve their own interests, Dayton became the first larger city in the nation to replace elected mayors with hired professional managers to run the city. The next few years saw a succession of many ministers who served for brief periods. They were Reverend L.N. Cooper 1913, Reverend W.S. Jamerson 1913-1914, and Reverend J. W. DeVaughn 1914-1915.

In July 1916, with the church badly run down, both financially and spiritually, Reverend Edgar O. Price accepted the pastorate. His first work was the ordination of deacons. On June 13, 1919, under the guidance of Reverend Price, lot no. 23275 were purchased from Frederick P. and Catherine Beavers, and the Church was built at the present site. Reverend Price resigned in 1921 being followed for a brief period by Reverend DeLoach. In 1923, Reverend Edward W. Wright accepted the call to pastor the Church. He found it with a few members and deeply in debt.

Dayton residents believed that the possibility of being fired by the city council created an incentive for the city managers to perform their duties honestly. In the 1920s, Dayton became a center of Ku Klux Klan activity in the state. Like other industrial cities such as Akron, anti-immigrant and anti-Semitic feelings in Dayton fueled Ku Klux Klan membership, during that decade. Reverend Wright labored hard and was successful in elevating both the spiritual and financial status of the Church. Under the leadership of Reverend Wright, lot no. 23276 was purchased from George W. and Martha A. Grismer on August 8, 1925.

Reverend Wright departed from Mt. Pisgah in 1927. During the same year, Shiloh Baptist Church at 359 Springfield Street was organized by some of Mount Pisgah's members with Reverend Wright as the Pastor. Reverend Samuel Jackson pastored at Mt. Pisgah, for a year or so, beginning in 1928, and during 1931-1932, Reverend William M. Parker pastored the Church. From 1933-1935, Reverend James T. Crable pastored the Church. Reverend Crable was married to the former Catherine Carricker, daughter of our beloved Deacon Eddie Carricker. He also baptized our former associate minister, Reverend William L. Brown. Reverend Crable resigned in 1935; and in the next four

years, Mount Pisgah had two short-term ministers, Reverend Radford and Reverend J. Scruggs. Reverend William L. Brown became a son in the ministry under Reverend Scruggs.

Dayton benefited economically from the growth of wartime industries during World War II, receiving approximately $1.7 billion in government defense contracts during the war. The city's economy has remained strong in the decades following the Second World War, despite a decline in many of its traditional industries.[2] Reverend Eugene T. Britton was called to pastor Mount Pisgah in October 1939. His pastorate is the longest in the history of the Church. Many improvements were realized to include the building additions and remodeling.

In 1939, Pastor Britton was blessed with several sons in the ministry, including Reverend G. W. Tann, Reverend Harvey Thornton, Reverend D. R. Gilbert, and Reverend Willie Smith. After serving for over thirty years, Reverend Britton retired on February 11, 1973. Reverend Willie L. Rowland accepted the call from Mt. Pisgah on April 30, 1973. Reverend Rowland completed tasks started under Reverend Britton's pastorate and have initiated numerous other additions and improvements to the Church. He has been a faithful shepherd, a tireless leader, and a dedicated servant as he led the Church through the past thirty years of growth and service to God. To name a few accomplishments under Reverend Rowland's leadership: A house and a lot at 4 Diamond Street were purchased from Brother Ben Mathis.

New stained glass windows were installed in the Church Sanctuary. In 1983, ground was broken to build an addition to the Church, a parking lot was paved, a ramp

[2]Facts About Ohio, http://www.myohiogenealogy.com/oh_county/mty.htm (accessed January 15, 2011).

for the handicapped was built and the baptism pool was relocated. In June 1988, the Church purchased three lots on Springfield Street and formed a planning committee for building the new church. God continued to bless Mt. Pisgah. On October 29, 1989, under the guidance of Reverend Rowland, the church purchased a house at 15 Diamond Avenue. The house was demolished April 15, 1990 to make room for the new church building.

Two lots were donated to Mount Pisgah by Mrs. M.A. Bradley, who lives at 2650 W. Alexander, Bellbrook Rd. During 1998, a lot was purchased from Vince L. Brown. Under Pastor Rowland's ministry on April 16, 1994, ground was broken for a new church adjacent to the present structure. On February 26, 1995, the worship service was rendered in the new sanctuary while renovation of the old structure was underway. Dedication services were held June 26-July 2, 1995. Our Mother Church and other sister churches participated including the following: Reverend Brown and Bethel Baptist Church, Reverend McFarland and Mt. Olive Baptist Church, Reverend Henderson and Corinthian Baptist Church, Reverend Parker and Shiloh Baptist Church, and Reverend Strong and Greater Galilee Baptist Church.

Mt. Pisgah concluded the services with her Mother Church—Zion Baptist and Reverend Harris. The July 2, 1995 event was indeed a service of praise and worship. The dedication service started off with a march from the Church to Irving Street with members singing: "Look Where He Has Brought Us From." The new sanctuary has a baptismal pool located behind the pulpit and choir stand. The first floor includes the Pastor's office, church office, nursery, sound system room, choir room, nurse's guild room, two restrooms, and an elevator for the handicapped. The second floor consists of

classrooms, rest rooms, a kitchen, and social room named after Reverend E. T. Britton (The Reverend E. T. Britton Social Hall).

There are two landscaped parking lots—one located on Diamond Ave. the other on Springfield Street. The Church's baby grand piano, organ, drums, and sound room were dedicated to the late Jacqueline Rowland who was Mt. Pisgah's Minister of Music. On June 21, 1996, Reverend Rowland performed the first Golden Wedding for Deacon and Mrs. William Tann. Reminiscing to 1975, Reverend Rowland's first candidate for baptism was Kimberly Garrison, and the first funeral he preached was Kimberly Garrison. The Garrison and Langston family in remembrance of Kimberly Garrison donated the communion table to the Church.

With a population of 559,062, Dayton was the county's largest community in 2000. The county experienced a 2.6 percent decline in population between 1990 and 2000, reducing the total number of residents to 166,179. The principal reason for this decline was a desire of some residents to escape the busyness of Dayton. The county averages 1,210 people per square mile. Reverend Willie L. Rowland retired May 25, 2003, after thirty years of dedicated and faithful service to Mt. Pisgah Missionary Baptist Church. The Church bestowed upon Reverend Rowland the honor of Pastor Emeritus on September 7, 2003.

After seventeen months of prayer and fasting, the Lord sent a pastor to lead Mount Pisgah into the 21st century. Pastor K. Edwin Bryant was extended a call by Mount Pisgah on Friday, October 2, 2004. He has proven to be an anointed visionary, leader, and humanitarian who is concerned with liberating all that are spiritually, socially, economically, and educationally oppressed. As a result of the anointing, he can be

credited with leading the church during unprecedented spiritual growth, developing numerous ministries, and providing leadership for many operational, organizational, and financial achievements. He is teacher, preacher, pastor, and scholar of the New Testament and Early Christianity.

He is often credited with saying, "I am not changing the gift, just the wrapping paper."[3] Mount Pisgah started an 8:00 A.M. service, November 2009 at 1 Diamond Avenue. The second location started September 2010 at 9:30 A.M. service at the Danberry Movie Theater located in Huber Heights. The third service starts at 10:30 A.M. back at 1 Diamond Avenue. The Mount Pisgah Church is continually striving to reach the surrounding community. The Mount Pisgah Wednesday in the Word & Worship Bible studies are expositional teaching services that deliver the Word of God in a relevant, practical, and portable format through the power of the anointing and worship. [4]

Sunday school discipleship initiative provides educational support to Christians who range from new converts to those who have been working toward spiritual maturity for some time. The Leadership Development program is designed to identify and train future leaders for Christian service. The students within this program are generally being trained to become deacons, trustees, lay pastors, or armor bearers for the Senior Pastor. Faith Weaver curriculum is designed for the children of our ministry that interface learning on Sunday to build a system of faith development. The Family ministry is designed to assist the Senior Pastor with fulfilling his biblical role as the under shepherd.[5]

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[3]Kerry Bryant, *The Mount Pisgah Church Voice of the Visionary Issue One: Volume One* (The Mount's New Biannual Publication Inaugural Edition September2009-December 2009), 5.

[4]Ibid., 6.

[5]Ibid.

Each deacon is assigned a certain portion of the congregation (by zip code) and is responsible for assisting them with spiritual and or benevolent concerns. The Senior Pastor is still always accessible to his sheep. Trustee Ministry is designed to assist the Senior Pastor with all aspects of administration, facility management, as well as purchase and acquisitions. New Member becoming Connected and Empowered (N.I.C.E.) Ministry focuses on assisting members with assimilation and connecting each person and their gifts to existing or future ministry.

New Member fellowships are held once a quarter to allow new members to become acclimated with the church, the vision of the pastor, and the numerous opportunities for ministry and discipleship that the church has to offer. [6]The Mount Pisgah Church Youth and Young Adult Ministry (YYA) is organized from a comprehensive team of youth and young adults that guide activities and foster spiritual growth for the YYA of Mount Pisgah. The YYA are comprised of members of Mount Pisgah ranging from ages three to twenty-two. The team works together to promote Kingdom building through the vision of Senior Pastor. [7]Faith Formation ministry is committed to providing biblically based education that equips and empower each member to live out the convictions of the Christian faith.

Faith Formation is responsible for recruitment, training, and evaluation of each teacher. The ministry also provides educational planning and a unified curriculum to all ministries. The College ministry provides a positive environment that allows students to excel spiritually while simultaneously pursuing his or her professional goals. We are committed to providing support, mentoring, and assistance with developing life skills and

[6]Ibid., 12.

[7]Ibid., 16.

teaching students how to honor this season in their life. The One Flesh is committed to providing both an open and safe haven for couples, spouses, or the seriously involved to be nurtured and supported by offering relevant, structured, and practical godly solutions to daily issues of living within the covenant of marriage.

One Flesh is responsible for counseling all nuptials. The Locker Room is an initiative sponsored by the Men's Ministry. This ministry is committed to supporting men with ministry that respects and honors the complexity of being the priest, prophet, and provider of his home. Each Locker Room fellowship promotes an atmosphere of transparency and trust, which lead to faith development and servitude. The Women's Ministry is committed to empowering women to live effective, godly lives and to encouraging women to develop wholeness mentally, physically, relationally, culturally, and spiritually through a practical foundation of the Word of God.

The purpose of the Music and Worship ministry is to impart ministry that prepares kingdom soil for the proclamation of the Word through music, visual arts, dance, and drama. The resource of psalmists, musicians, worship leaders, dancers, and dramatists usher God's people beyond praise and prepare the atmosphere for worship. The task of the Missionary Society is to teach missions (both home and foreign), engage in mission action, and support world missions through prayer. The Hospitality Ministry's mission is to extend a sincere, heart-felt greeting to believers in Christ who grace our presence as visitors during worship services. [8]

This ministry serves as a branch of hospitality that complements and projects the spiritual attitude of our Pastor. Ushers offer friendly and courteous care to all worshippers

[8]Ibid., 21.

during all worship or Bible study services. Each person involved in the ministry celebrates the opportunity to serve with the spirit of love and humility.[9]

Synergy

The awareness and need to mature began early for this writer; at age ten, he sensed a need to know and understand God. The importance of going to church with his family became a cherished event. The writer had been identified at school as a special needs student and was assigned to special education courses. This created the awareness that there was something different and lacking in him. He watched his father and the other men in his family, they seemed normal and did not struggle with church, life, or school matters. This made the writer angry with himself, frustrated at school, and left with a helpless feeling. He asked a few friends for help, a close friend had a father who was a schoolteacher, and his other friends had fathers, uncles, and church leaders who helped them. When he got to church, he started praying and asking God to help; he noticed each week as he prayed that he was improving in his special education courses. The writer felt God was answering his prayer by helping him understand his schoolwork.

To show God how thankful he was, the writer started to read the Bible; he began with the book of Psalms. He enjoyed the readings so much he read the entire Bible. The writer felt less angry and was not frustration at school anymore. The writer's life was so impacted by prayer and reading the Bible that he set his heart on serving God and working with young people, bringing them to God, who would help them with their schoolwork. This writer's life from that point was dedicated to leading young people to God. The writer's life work thus far has centered around young people ages ten to

[9]Ibid., 23.

twenty-four as a student associate at: McKinley United Methodist Church; Earle C. Clements Job Corps Academy; as a job instructor at Career Preparation Period Morganfield, Kentucky; Youth Build Corporation in the city of Evansville; as Academic Advisor at Wilberforce University; and currently as Associate Pastor of Mount Pisgah Baptist Church. It was in the context of the church performing youth ministry that the writer began to envision a Rites-of-Passage program for young Black males. As the writer ministered and developed relationships with youth and men around the church, the need for leadership and mentoring became crystal clear.

During personal encounters with the young and elderly men in the church, the writer would hear personal testimonies about the lack of male relationships and mentors in the lives of men. As the writer observed young men in and around the community, he observed them as unfocused, angry, and frustrated. They talked about being bored, lonely, and helpless and referenced themselves in negative terms and had nothing good to say about the church, community, schools, or their homes. Many of the young men were too young to identify why they felt the way they did; many of them had already become involved in negative behaviors as a result of how they felt day-to-day.

The writer felt a deep burden in his heart for the men—young and old. He remembered experiencing similar feelings in his youth. He recalled the desire and need for men older and younger who could encourage and place him on the right path. He remembered that in his encounters with the elderly men, the majority of them acknowledged the lack and need for male mentors in their lives. Many had expressed how they secretly felt their families, the church, and community had let them down in this area.

Mount Pisgah is a family church located in the East Dayton community. Many of the members grew up there and were second and third generation church members. The elderly men were strongly rooted in the church and very interested in the plight of young males. The young males were few in number and drifting away from the church due to their lack of interest. The writer sensed it was a prime time to solicit interest and workers for a Rites-of-Passage Program. It would bridge the gap between the church, the community, families, and the elderly and young males. He spoke with the elders and they agreed.

CHAPTER TWO

THE STATE OF THE ART IN MINISTRY

In this chapter, the author will demonstrate familiarity with literature related to the project model, which have relevant principles and concepts for this project. The writer will look at several texts that will offer vital information and methods that result in men realizing the importance of developing a rites of passage program in the church and the community. However this does not negate the fact that women play a vital role and are equally important in men rediscovering responsibility for the community.

This project does not seek to discredit or devalue the critical role that single mothers play in the life of the church; however, there will be a strong emphasis toward men throughout the project because the goal of the project was to motivate men to develop a Rites of Passage program for Black males.

In *Why Men Hate Going to Church,* David Murrow sought to explain why the attendance of men has decreased overall in churches. He went as far as saying that men are the world's largest un-reached people group.[1] Murrow stated that nine out of ten American men believe in God, that five out of six American men call themselves Christians, but that only two out of six men attend church on any given weekend.[2]

[1]David Murrow, *Why Men Hate Going to Church* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 7.

[2]Ibid., 8.

Franklin E. Frazier and Anthony M. Plat, in their work, *The Negro Family in the United States*, provide an understanding of the processes of family adjustment and change. The book reveals wide variations in the standards of different social classes. The African American or Negro family suffers when there are no morals and values within a community. A lack of morals and values within a community lead to crime and other forms of antisocial behavior.[3]

Millard J. Erickson, in the book *Christian Theology*, gives a presentation of Christian doctrine based on scripture. This book gives an account of critical historical exegesis. It helps students understand the concept of religion in history. The author relates Christian theology to Christian living and Christian ministry in today's world. He also addresses revelation in history, revelation through history, and revelation as history.[4]

Jawanza Kunjufu, in the book *Countering the Conspiracy to Destroy Black Boys*, points out that African American parents, teachers, administrators, and all members of the community are part of the conspiracy. He believes that everyone in the community has the responsibility in countering the conditions that are destroying the future of youth. Kunjufu believes that Black children have been neglected. Kunjufu also describes how European Americans, as people, have abused their power and kept African Americans from excelling in life.[5]

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[3]E. Franklin Frazier and Anthony M. Platt, *The Negro Family in the United States* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

[4]Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2003).

[5]Jawanza Kunjufu, *Countering the Conspiracy to Destroy Black Boys* (Chicago, IL: African American Images, 1982).

In his text, *Countering the Conspiracy to Destroy Black Boys II*, Jawanza Kunjufu advocates a communal approach. In *Countering the Conspiracy to Destroy Black Boys III*, Kunjufu shows that African American parents, teachers, administrators, and all members of the community are part of the conspiracy. Like in his first volume, the author believes that everyone in the community has the responsibility in countering the conditions that are destroying the future of youth. In this important work, Kunjufu attempts to answer the following questions: What is the relationship between Black children and the problems of the larger society? Is Black children being educated or trained? Why are teachers spending more time disciplining children than educating them? Do you have a home program to develop your child's God given talents?[6]

Jawanza Kunjufu, in the book *Motivating and Preparing Black Youth for Success* inspires the reader to think about the following questions: Does America still need Black labor? Who taught a child to play that's my car? Why did educators of Black youth stop demanding they score 110?[7]

Amos N. Wilson, in the book, *The Developmental Psychology of The Black Child*, shares some of the things that help to shape children even before they are born. The author talks about the diet of the mother that carries the child and how that affects the brain and the children's ability to learn.[8]

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[6]Kunjufu, *Countering the Conspiracy to Destroy Black Boys*, 1, 2.

[7]Jawanza, Kunjufu, *Motivating and Preparing Black Youth for Success* (Chicago, IL: African American Images, 1986).

[8]Amos N. Wilson, *The Developmental Psychology of the Black Child* (New York, NY: Africana Research Publications, 1978).

Paul Hill Jr., in the book *Coming of Age: African American Male Rites-of-Passage*, explores an important aspect of coming of age; this book examines how the Black community can institutionalize rites of passage as part of the child-rearing process.[9]

Chris McNair, in the book *Young Lions: Christian Rites-of-Passage for African American Young Men*, introduces and supports a mentoring program that offers African American young men positive peer group involvement, hands-on skill development, knowledge of the African American culture, and relationships with Christian African American men as role models. This resource provides the tools and encouragement needed to help leaders of African American young men experience the joy of supporting and challenging youth to grow as Christ's disciples. It includes practical tips for getting started, a comprehensive leadership recruitment and training plan, complete meeting outlines and directions, reproducible pages for participants, and an interaction-oriented mentor's guide.[10]

Useni Eugene Perkin, in the book *Harvesting New Generations: The Positive Development of Black Youth* offers a comprehensive exposition on Black youth. This study provides a careful analysis of their problems personal, societal, and institutional, as well as potential solutions for the future.[11]

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[9]Paul Hill Jr., *Coming of Age: African American Male Rites-of-Passage* (Chicago, IL: African AmericanImages, 1992).

[10]Chris McNair, *Young Lions: Christian Rites of Passage for African American Young Men* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2001).

[11]U. E. Perkins, *Harvesting New Generations: The Positive Development of Black Youth* (Chicago: Third World Press, 1986).

T. Garrott Benjamin, in the book *Boys to Men: A Handbook for Survival* proposes a resource for the young, middle-aged and very mature, which are looking for answers, and helping others find answers that make sense on the tedious journey of making the transition from boys to men.[12]

Lathardus Goggins II, in the book *African Centered Rites-of-Passage and Education*, discusses the correlation between one's self-conception and one's academic performance. This book explains African-centered rites and the rituals and ceremonies behind them.[13]

Bret Stephenson, in the book *From Boys to Men: Spiritual Rites-of-Passage in an Indulgent Age*, provides a guide to restoring the successful models used by ancient cultures the world over to raise adolescent boys. It explains the negative effects of Western youth culture and how it can be transformed. It offers instructions for integrating basic rites of passage into modern family life and youth programs. For tens of thousands of years, all across the globe, societies have been coping with raising adolescents. Why is it then that native cultures never had the need for juvenile halls, residential treatment centers, mood-altering drugs, or boot camps? How did they avoid the high incidence of teen violence America is experiencing, and how did they prevent their youth from relying on drugs and alcohol, the use of which has become so prevalent in Western society?[14]

In *From Boys to Men*, Bret Stephenson shows readers that older cultures did not magically avoid adolescence; instead, they developed successful rituals and rites of

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[12]T. G. Benjamin, *Boys to Men* (Indianapolis, IN: Heaven on Earth Publishing House, 1993).

[13]Lathardus Goggins II, *African Centered Rites of Passage and Education* (Chicago, IL: African American Images, 1996).

[14]Bret Stephenson, *From Boys to Men: Spiritual Rites of Passage in an Indulgent Age* (Rochester, NY: Park Street Press, 2006).

passage for sculpting teen boys into healthy young men. From Aleutian Eskimos to Polynesian Islanders, from tribal Africans to Australian Aborigines, each culture found archetypal ways to initiate their boys into the adult community. Stephenson explains the basics of rites-of-passage and offers insight into how to reintroduce these successful practices and traditional understandings into modern family life and programs for youth. He discusses the damaging effects of our youth culture and the negative teen products that are fueled by corporate America and reveals how we can counteract these negative forces by using meaningful rites-of-passage to create a society with happy and healthy adolescent boys.[15]

Louise Carus Mahdi, in the text *Crossroads: The Quest for Contemporary Rites-of- Passage*, highlights how thinkers and activists from many orientations and traditions are coming together to explore ways to reconstitute rites of passage as a form of community healing for our public and personal ills. Crossroads is a comprehensive collection of over fifty cutting-edge writings on diverse aspects of the transition to adulthood.[16]

Marilyn Maye, *Orita: Rite-of- passage for youth of African descent in America*, is a guide for parents seeking to design a Rites-of-Passage program for their adolescent youth and for parents considering such a program. Orita (meaning crossroads) prepares participants for adulthood by teaching life management skills in the context of African heritage and biblical principles. At the Orita celebration, family and community honor their youth and acknowledge their transition into adulthood. Parents are guided through

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[15]Louise Carus Mahdi, Nancy Geyer Christopher, and Michael Meade, eds. *Crossroads: The Quest for Contemporary Rites of Passage* (LaSalle, IL: Open Court, 1996).

[16]Mahdi, Christopher, & Meade, *Crossroads*.

every aspect of the design and planning of a program tailored for their youth. The program is also flexible and can be applied to families of various cultures.[17]

Haki R. Madhubuti, *Black Men, Obsolete, Single, Dangerous?: The Afrikan American Family in Transition,* here is the seminal and critical work that helped solidify Haki Madhubuti as an informed, passionate, and caring commentator on Black life, culture, relationships, and the development and stability of the Black community. *Black Men* is an integral text for anyone with vested interest in building healthy, thriving Black families and communities. Madhubuti takes aim at some of the critical issues facing the African American family. He offers useful, pointed, practical solutions for overcoming these obstacles and challenges.[18]

Joseph L. White and James H. Cones III, write *Black Man Emerging: Facing the Past and Seizing a Future in America.* They ask the question that in the face of centuries of institutional and interpersonal racism, in the light of the signals they receive from society, and given the choices they must make about what they want from life and how to go about getting it, how can Black men in America realize their full potential? This work is a psychological and social portrait that reflects their personal views on the struggle of Black men against oppression and for self-determination. Using numerous case histories and biographical sketches of Black men who have failed and those who have prevailed, the authors describe strategies for responding to racism and entrenched power—underscoring the healing capacity of religion, family, Black consciousness movements,

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[17]Marilyn Maye, *Orita: Rites of passage for youth of African descent in America* (New York, NY: Faith Works, 2000).

[18]Haki R. Madhubuti, *Black Men, Obsolete, Single, Dangerous?: The Afrikan American Family in Transition* (Chicago, IL: Third World Press, 1990).

mentorships, educational programs, paid employment, and other positive forces. They also explore the concept of identity as it applies to being Black and male and the influence of Black men on American culture.[19]

Neenga Warfield-Coppock, *Afrocentric Theory and Applications: Adolescent Rites-of- Passage,* refers romantically and inaccurately to Africa, unlike most Rites-of-Passage books, this one is rooted in real experience and practical application and genuine knowledge of African cultural values. This is the book for people that are committed to thinking critically and developing programs that truly impact children, not just trying to put something together because the school or church needs time to fill up.[20]

Nathan Hare and Julia Hare, *Bringing the Black Boy to Manhood: The Passage*, bringing the Black Boy to Manhood issued the call and was the catalyst for the rites of passage movement for African-American boys. The late psychologist, Asa Hilliard, called it: "a unique and indispensable contribution...a superior roadmap." Praised by respected educators such as Jawanza Kunjufu, author of *Conspiracy to Destroy Black Boys* and Maulana Karenga, who wrote the book, *Introduction to Black Studies* and created Kwanzaa, *Bringing the Black Boy to Manhood* is: "a needed and creative approach" that "can become as meaningful to Black people as Kwanzaa" (in the observation of Prof. Oba Tshaka), based on his decades on the founding leadership of NBUF (the National Black United Front).[21]

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[19]Joseph L. White and James H. Cone, *Black Man Emerging: Facing the Past and Seizing a Future in America* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1999).

[20]Neenga Warfield-Coppock, *Afrocentric Theory and Applications: Adolescent Rites of Passage* (Washington, DC: Baobab Associates, Inc., 1990).

[21]Nathan Hare and Julia Hare, *Bringing the Black Boy to Manhood: The Passage* (San Francisco, CA: Black Think Tank, 1985).

William Grier and Price M. Cobbs, in *Black Rage*, examine the full range of Black lives from the vantage point of psychiatry; this widely acclaimed work has established itself as the classic statement of the desperation, conflicts, and anger of Black life in America today. *Black Rage* tells of the insidious effects of the heritage of slavery; describes love, marriage, and the family; addresses the sexual myths and fears of Blacks and whites; chronicles how the schools fail the Black child; examines mental illness among Black people and the psychic stresses engendered by discrimination; and, finally, focuses on the miasma of racial hatred that envelops this country, why it exists, and what will surely happen if it is not soon dispelled.[22]

Andrew Billingsley, *Climbing Jacob's Ladder: The Enduring Legacies of African-American Families,* in this companion to Black Families in White America (1968), sociologist Billingsley addresses the strengths and weaknesses of African American families, concluding that their strengths are: "by far more powerful and contain the seeds of their survival and rejuvenation." Drawing on many studies and using numerous charts, the author first discusses African American family structure, then goes on to consider the legacy from Africa, family patterns during slavery and after, and the rise and fall of the Black working class. Stressing the African American family's adaptability, he shows how the extended family, as well as community institutions, can serve as stepping-stones to success. The Black church, self-help, and government, he writes, can all play a part in bolstering the African American family. Although Billingsley argues that forces in society lead to single-parent families, he glosses over the epidemic of teenage pregnancy. A chapter on single mothers includes only success stories, and his contention that African

[22]William Grier and Price M. Cobbs, *Black Rage* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1968).

American youths value marriage and stability pivots on an observation made by a sociologist in 1967.[23]

Dr. Jawanza Kunjufu, *Adam! Where Are You?: Why Most Black Men Don't Go to Church,* addresses the question of why the church is 75% female and offers ways to bring Black men back to God. This book raises the question of why most black men do not go to church. It asks why the percentage of African-American men is greater in Islam than in Christianity. It asks how the church can draw African-American males into the ranks.[24]

Dr. Jawanza Kunjufu, *Developing Strong Black Male Ministries*, offers concrete solutions to real-world problems are discussed in this guidebook for church officers on how to increase the involvement of African American males in the ministry. From drugs and prison to health and homosexuality, this treatise investigates the needs and trends of African American males, the steps the church has taken to address these issues, and modern troubles relating to involvement in the church.[25]

Tony Evans, *Kingdom Man: Every Man's Destiny, Every Woman's Dream*, when a man follows the principles of biblical manhood, those around him benefit from his leadership and care. *Kingdom Man* challenges and equips men to understand fully their position under God as well as their position over what God has given them. The biblical definition of a man is one who has learned to operate under the authority of Jesus Christ

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[23]Andrew Billingsley, *Climbing Jacob's Ladder: The Enduring Legacies of African-American Families* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1992).

[24]Jawanza Kunjufu, *Adam! Where Are You?: Why Most Black Men Don't Go to Church* (Chicago, IL: African American Images, 1994).

[25]Jawanza Kunjufu, *Developing Strong Black Male Ministries* (Chicago, IL: African American Images, 2006).

while carrying out responsible and legitimate leadership within the sphere of influence that God has placed him. *Kingdom Man* provides concepts men can follow that will help them to actively pursue ways to maximize and develop the character qualities of biblical manhood in their lives.[26]

T. D. Jakes, in *He-Motions: Even Strong Men Struggle*, believes that men feel the pressure of fulfilling many roles in life: husband, father, son, businessman, and leader. Now Bishop Jakes comes to their aid with this guidebook to help every man understand his own emotional inner workings, and to offer biblically inspired direction toward being the man God wants him to be. Practical, inspirational, and refreshingly honest, *He-Motions* is also the ultimate source for women who seek to comprehend and care for the men in their lives. It will help them decode men's often-baffling behavior and will offer eye-opening insights that will bring greater intimacy and healing to their relationships.[27]

Roosevelt L. Noble, *Black Rage in the American Prison System*, Noble's thesis is that African-American inmates transport Black rage into the prison subculture, which significantly affects prison violence rates. He finds previous studies superficial and raises the bar for future examinations by proposing a sensitive and taboo theory to explain the strong racial patterns observed in prison victimization. Noble's work supports the importation theory of the inmate subculture proposed by Irwin and Cressey. He builds on their theory by advocating for the inclusion of race and other cultural factors concerning the inmate and staff populations into predicative models. He concludes that prisons with

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[26]Tony Evans, *Kingdom Man: Every Man's Destiny, Every Woman's Dream* (Carol Streams, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2012).

[27]T. D. Jakes, *He-Motions: Even Strong Men Struggle* (New York, NY: Penguin Group Inc., 2004).

greater racial disparities between the inmate and staff populations experience higher staff assault rates.[28]

Lerone Bennett, *Before The Mayflower: A History of Black America 1619-1964: The Classic Account of the Struggles and Triumphs of Black Americans,* in this completely revised edition of his superb history of Black America, he brings his stirring narrative of the Black experience up to date. Incorporating the insights of recent scholarship, Mr. Bennett traces Black history from its origins in the great empires of western Africa, the transatlantic journey to slavery through Reconstruction, the Jim Crow era, and the civil-rights upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s. [29]

John W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* taking into account the major recent studies, this volume presents an updated analysis of the life of the Black slave—his African heritage, culture, family, acculturation, behavior, religion, and personality.[30]

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[28]Roosevelt L. Noble, *Black Rage in the American Prison System* (New York, NY: LFB Scholarly Publishing, 2006).

[29]Lerone Bennett, *Before The Mayflower: A History of Black America 1619-1964: The Classic Account of the Struggles and Triumphs of Black Americans* (New York, NY: Penguin Book, 1964).

[30]John W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1979).

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

In Chapter one, the author concluded that at Mount Pisgah Baptist Church, there is a lack of male presence in the household. This hinders the ministry's vitality and ultimately impedes life transformation in the home. In order for the lives of young men to be transformed, there must be a holistic approach to radically challenging their lives in the areas of manhood and fatherhood.

Historical, biblical, theological, and theoretical foundations will support this project. These foundations assist the project to become a vital tool for all ministry contexts that desire to see older men actively engaged in designing a rites-of-passage program.

In the twenty-first century, professional religious Black leaders must increase their responsibilities in reaching and helping young Black males negotiate life skills n order that they reach maturity. Younger men need older men actively involved in their lives on every block, in every neighborhood, throughout America. Older men need to remain consistent in their interaction with younger males by being highly visible and available to them throughout the community. Religious Black leaders must develop programs like Rites-of-Passage, which offer instruction on how to be adult role models, skill development, Black culture, and a male socialization process that will lead youth into real manhood.

The objective of this project is to enhance older male participation in the lives of youth through the development of a Rites-of-Passage program. First, from the historical standpoint, the writer will address three things; the African scene, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and Malcolm X. Second, from the biblical standpoint the writer will address two things: Jethro to Moses, and Jesus to the Disciples. Third, from a theological standpoint, the writer will address two things: Black theology and liberation theology.

This project emerged and evolved from an intrinsic need of the writer to have a positive-male role model in his life during his early formation of spiritual, physical, and emotional development. Abandoned by his father early in life, the responsibility of nurture, foundational guidance, and love became the responsibility of the writer's grandfather. This experience left a burden in the heart of the writer, causing him to take action toward changing the lives of adult men as a way of eradicating the destructive effects of Black male abandonment.

Historical Foundation

> Rites-of-passage play a central role in African socialization, demarking the different stages in an individual's development, as well as that person's relationship and role to the broader community.
>
> Alik Shahadah

What does history teach us concerning Rites-of-passage for African American men/boys? How did older men in the African American community mentor/model for younger males rites-of-passage? Historically, older men invited several men to come together in an informal setting to discuss character, authority, attitude of nurture, and responsibility. The writer's grandfather stepped in for the first five years of his life to be a role model. The writer's grandfather shares wisdom, responsibility, character, and values.

The writer considers rites-of-passage when an older man shares wisdom, values, character, with young men in either formal or informal setting. Rites-of-Passage is exemplified when older men, for example father and son get together and share; it is also possible when an older man stands-in for an absentee father and speak words of wisdom to a younger male figure. Rites-of-passage could be verbal and non-verbal and can be received by shadowing a person.

Rites -of- Passage, a term first used by French ethnographer Arnold VanGennep,[1] are rituals or events marking the stages of a person's advancement through life. Rituals are a powerful means of transference of religious culture from generation to generation. What rituals is the elders' transferring to the younger generation? Rites-of- passage, according to Van Gennep, always involve a separation from the old stage of life, and in between or luminal stage where instruction and rituals take place, and a reincorporation back into community.[2] The Mount Pisgah Church has to reincorporate the elders of the church through instruction to remember their role and responsibilities to the community.

Dr. Muata Ashby defines Rites-of-Passage as an important formalized means of transferring religious information and culture. The writer would suggest creating a formalized means of transferring information and culture to young Black males start with the elders of the church. The Rites-of-Passage provide support for the initiatives, supporting young men as they are socialized into the culture and at the same time are led to become productive members of society. The society has lowered the standards for our youth to become productive members of the society by the brainwashing of the public

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[1]Arnold Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1966), 10.

[2]Ibid., 11.

school system. The writer would suggest creating church-based material to study within the Mount Pisgah Church. The writer would also suggest writing a curriculum from an Afrocentric perspective through the rites-of-passage program. In ancient Egyptian society, the formal Rites-of-Passage encompassed the movement from childhood into two main levels of social status leading to adulthood. Thus, the first rite-of-passage is movement into primary school for four years. The rites-of-passage was highly sophisticated and based on training to be a literate and productive member of society, having a valuable trade to offer by the age of twenty. The Mount Pisgah Church must value the importance of teaching our young Black males to read. The elders have a responsibility to make sure young Black males can read and write. The ritual of rites-of-passage should mark the culmination of the training of the initiate who will now assume a position of full participation in the social and economic activities of the community.[3]

Joseph L. White and James H. Cones III give examples beginning in childhood and continuing through late adolescence; male children were guided through rites-of-passage by village elders. In pre-colonial African societies, a high value was placed on children. Elders, like young people, are considered to be a full-part of African communities.[4] Children were guided not only by the tribal elders, but the biological family, extended family, and the entire village was integral components of the child-

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[3]Muata Ashby, *The African Origins of African Civilization, Mystic Religion, Yoga Mystical Spirituality and Ethic Philosophy* (Miami, FL: Cruzian Mystic Books, 2002), 194-196.

[4]Ashby, *The African Origins of African Civilization, Mystic Religion, Yoga Mystical Spirituality and Ethic Philosophy,* 194-196.

rearing process as central figures in the psychological and social development of young males, tribal elders acted as mentors.[5]

Mentors taught youths the tribal culture, the village's history, and the role of God and spiritual ancestors in everyday life. Ideally, a boy's mentor should be his father. Whether it is the father or not, every boy needs a respected male figure to learn from. Where is the leadership of the church and community? The church is failing in training our future leaders. As future tribal leaders, males were expected to preserve the village culture and pass it on to the next generation. Boys were taught their responsibilities as husbands and fathers, proper care of the body, and appropriate sexual behavior. The elders passed on the survival skills that would enable these young men to take care of themselves and others. Adolescents learned crafts, hunting and farming, and self-defense.[6]

The Mount Pisgah Church has failed to respond to the plight of Black boys and the need for positive role models. The Mount Pisgah Church commitment to the process of interaction with young males is limited to Men's ministry and Sunday, for unlimited time, and creating a thorough follow-up mechanism is still not in place. The male leadership of Mount Pisgah Church has made the choice of showing young Black males the model of pulling oneself up by one's bootstraps. We have men with negative attitudes about being among our young Black males. The criteria, then, should not be educated men but men of strong character. The rites-of-passage program for the church is very important in helping young Black males know when they become men.

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[5]Joseph L. White and James H. Cone III, *Black Man Emerging: Facing the Past and Seizing a Future in America* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1999), 19-20.

[6]Ibid., 20.

Rites-of-Passage into adulthood represent a process rooted in the community. The Dayton community has failed to make a commitment to our young Black males. The Mount Pisgah Church has failed to create the proper programs for young Black males to succeed in the community. The writer knows from an educational perspective that the Black church is not preparing our young Black males for college. The young Black male leaves the Dayton community once he received his degree and fails to give back to his community. The example of today would be Wilberforce University and Central State University with its declining enrollment of students each year. Every boy needs a male role model.

In Rites-of-Passage programs, youth are divided based on gender and age. A curriculum is designed for them to achieve. Rites-of-passage programs have a curriculum, most of which includes lessons on African history and culture. When they master the curriculum, they can then move from one stage to another. In Rites-of-Passage programs, men work together. The writer encourages parents to place their sons in a Rites-of-Passage program.

The writer organized a group of nine men willing to participate in the program. The writer developed study sessions with this group, and discussing traits for male development. The church is the ideal institution to build Rites-of-Passage programs.

Rites-of-Passage are the processes of developing the necessary tools and knowledge that will allow a human being to navigate into maturity or citizenship within that society. These stages of life are initiations, and they are called rites-of-passages because they mark significant stages in a human being's development from rebirth, to responsible adult, to eldership. The elders and the institutions in our communities need

the Rites-of-Passage program as much as the youth; they all must help teach each other and give purpose to the whole community or nation. Every boy needs a respected male figure to learn from.

The writer suggests every school, church, and community organization should implement a rites-of-passage program. The Mount Pisgah Church should implement a Rites-of-Passage program before 2015. In Africa, men separated boys from women and through a rigorous set of exercises, taught them the elements of manhood. Between infancy and six years old, boys gravitate to their mothers. The elders need to separate boys from women and through a rigorous set of exercises for the year teach them the elements of manhood. Adolescent males of all races have a warrior spirit as they enter puberty.

The church should not kill the spirit of our boys. Many single parent mothers feel the only way to harness this energy is to keep them in the house. African American males are more dangerous than other males; they simply do not have access to parents, educators, ministers, entrepreneurs, neighbors, professionals, and police who can teach them how to harness and properly direct this energy. The church has to provide the role models and mentors for young Black males beyond athletes and entertainers. The Mount Pisgah Church has to provide the positive elders with character to step up and help our young Black males. Rite -of- passage is an excellent tool in this area.[7]

In Judaism, the bar or bat mitzvah initiates a rite-of-passage into the Jewish adult community. At the age of thirteen, Jews automatically become bar or bat mitzvah, full-fledged members of the community. Nevertheless, the ceremony associated with this

[7]Jawanza Kunjufu, *State of Emergency: We Must Save African American Males* (Chicago, IL: African American Images, 2001), 177.

change of status has become one of Judaism's most potent rites- of-passage. Bar mitzvah does not appear in the Bible, which gives the age twenty as the time when adult obligations begin.[8] However, by the first century Common Era adulthood was universally held to begin at thirteen for boys and twelve for girls, a view codified in the Talmud, which states, "At age thirteen, one becomes subject to the commandments." The earliest reference to any ceremony to mark this change dates from the Second Temple period, when a special blessing was recited for thirteen year old boys who had completed their first Yom Kippur fast. But in fact, until the Middle Ages, the religious distinction between a ten year old and a thirteen year old was strictly theoretical. Children were regularly counted for the purposes of creating a minyan, the quorum of ten needed for certain prayers, so that reaching the age of thirteen was not associated with any particular rituals or celebration.[9]

Prior to this moment, the father bore the responsibility for the actions of his children. At a bar and bat mitzvah the young adult will now accept responsibility for his or her actions. While Gentiles often dread their children becoming teenagers, the religious Jews commemorate the occasion, which not only transfers moral and spiritual responsibility to the boy and girl but also affirms them through this family celebration involving parents, relatives, and close friends. In Judaism, the bar or bat mitzvah initiates a rite-of-passage into the Jewish adult community.[10]

In their book Black Rage, William Grier and Price Cobbs, two Black psychiatrists, explain the paradox of racial oppression in a society committed to justice

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[8] **Exodus 30:14; Leviticus 27:3-5; Numbers 1:3, 20.**
[9] **Anita Diamant and Howard Cooper, *Living A Jewish Life* (New York: Haper Collins Publishers, 2007), 225-226**
[10] **Perry Stone, *Breaking The Jewish Code* (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2009), 88.**

and fair play creates a permanent condition of rage in the Black male that takes a psychic toll.[11] The dilemma for the Black male is what to do with his rage. The young African-American males involved in the urban rebellions expressed their pent-up rage and frustration in the burning and looting. Because Dr. King, the undisputed leader of the civil rights movement, understood the spiritual and psychological rhythms of the Black community, he was able to channel legitimate rage and frustration into nonviolent protest.[12]

Therefore, the writer wants to know are there historical precedence for older men that should suggest some benefit for older men caring for younger men. For example, Martin Luther King, Sr., caring for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. What would it look like to have a household with strong male figures and even positive female images? The Black community should expect greatness from young men, and the Black community, along with the Black church needs to cultivate young men with this expectation. The elders have to surround our young men with positive symbols of progress and success in our churches. Martin, Sr. taught Martin, Jr. the value of respecting himself as well as elders.

The positive male image, Daddy King, passes on essential information about society. The King family's emphasized self-worth, pride, and dignity that would provided a foundation for the abiding faith optimism, and self-confidence that Martin, Jr. would later display in his efforts to transform and redeem human society.[13] The positive male image mentors or passes on essential information about life, society, and suffering.

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[11]Grier and Cobbs, *Black Rage*.

[12]White and Cone, *Black Man Emerging,* 62-63.

[13]A private interview with Dr. Philip Leund, April 7, 1987; and Baldwin, "Understanding Martin King, Jr. within the Context of Southern Black Religious History," 6.

Lawrence D. Reddick explains the images of the strong father and mother, always a prominent feature of the King household, created in young Martin and his siblings a sense of the family as coherent, solid, and secure.[14] Reflecting on his father's image as a disciplinarian, Martin, Jr., once said with a laugh: "Whippings must not be so bad for I received them until I was fifteen."[15]

The King family passed on information about values of education and economics. The elders of Mount Pisgah Church, during the economics component, and the boys need to learn how to read the stock market pages and explain the distinction between a passbook account, certificate of deposit, and money market account. The Black church has to continue to support our Black institutions, meaning encouraging more of our students to attend HBCU's. The Mount Pisgah Church needs to provide parenting classes dealing with simple daily schedules for families that include homework, chores, supper, family conversation, family prayers, and bedtime. The Mount Pisgah Church elders need to read numerous books to our young men about Black history and the Black experience. The young Black men need to acquire some understanding of Ancient Egypt, the origin of civilization, and the ancient kings.

The King home was a place in which high moral and spiritual values were upheld. We must teach responsibility at a very young age. The King family was a great example of a Christian household in which disciplined and moral training was emphasized with high standards. Boys and elders need discipline in order to achieve goals. Martin Jr. was taught the value of prayer, meditation, fasting, and other expressions of spirituality; to an

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[14]Lawrence D. Reddick, *Crusader Without Violence: A Biography of Martin Luther King Jr.* (New York, NY: Harper& Brothers, Publishers, 1959), 2.

[15] Reddick, *Crusader Without Violence*, 5.

early understanding of the moral order and the religious idea.[16] The writer's grandfather and father valued prayer as an expression of spirituality.

The writer's grandmother was the positive female image. The sociologist E. Franklin Frazier writes:

> During slavery the Negro grandmother occupied in many instances an important place in the plantation economy and was highly esteemed by both the slaves and the masters. In the master's house she was very often the "mammy" whom history and tradition have idealized because of her loyalty and affection. Because of her intimate relations with the whites, all family secrets...were in her keeping; she was the defender of the family honor. The tie of affection between her and her charges was never outgrown. Often she was the confidential adviser of the older members of the household. To young mothers she was an authority on first babies. Age added dignity to her position, and her regime extended frequently through generations, occasionally through three.... She was the repository of the accumulated lore and superstition of the slaves.... When emancipation came, it was often the old grandmother who kept the generations together.[17]

During one instance where Daddy King was out in public, even though Daddy King was highly respected, sometime he would have a spat with a white person in public and see Rites-of-Passage could be verbal and non-verbal. At age six, he saw Daddy King storm out of a shoe store after a white clerk insisted that he sit in the black section before being served. "This was the first time I had ever seen my father angry," Martin, Jr., recalled years later. King states: "I still remember walking down the street beside him as he muttered, 'I don't care how long I have to live with this system, I will never accept it.'"[18] Rites-of-passage could be received by shadowing a person. King reflects:

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[16]Ervin Smith, *The Ethics of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (New York, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1981), 1.

[17]E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Family in the United States* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1968), 114-116.

[18]Martin Luther King, Jr., *Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story* (New York, NY: Harper & Brothers, 1958), 19.

> On another occasion, Martin, Jr., witnessed his father's courageous stand against a white policeman who, after charging him with a traffic violation, arrogantly called him "a boy." Daddy King replied indignantly, "I'm no boy…I'm a man, and until you call me one, I will not listen to you." The policeman was so surprised that he wrote the ticket up nervously and quickly left the scene.[19]

Like for example in Africa a young boy had to go out and kill a lion. Before then the boy would stick to the mother. What are implications of Daddy King working with Martin King Jr., in the civil rights movement? King recalls:

> His roots in that heritage of struggle that was embodied in Martin, Sr., and Alberta King, it is not difficult to understand why Martin Luther King, Jr., became the greatest civil rights leader on the American scene in this century. Their dream became his dreams, and their struggle, his struggle. Young Martin himself, referring specifically to his father's image as a civil rights leader, but certainly with a broader knowledge of the struggles of other family members who preceded him, insisted that 'With this heritage, it is not surprising that I had also learned to abhor segregation, considering it both rationally inexplicable and morally unjustifiable.'[20]

Daddy King and Alberta King used their values and education to model for young Martin what it meant to be a man.

There are many things to focus on in society when looking to instill values in young men; drugs, alcohol, the absence of a strong man in the home, gambling, divorce, and the absence of the church, or other community programs. Daddy King modeled for Martin what it meant to be a man even though they lived in society that did not consider African American men to be men but boys. If Daddy King did not pushed his son, Martin might not have ever emerged as the civil rights leader he was or would he have gone on to surpass his father by earning a Ph.D. degree.

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[19]Martin Luther King, Sr., and Clayton Riley, *Daddy King: An Autobiography* (New York, NY: William Morrow, 1980),108-109.

[20]King, *Daddy King, xi-xiv*; and King, *Stride toward Freedom*, 20-21.

The writer's father instilled in him the ideal of progress. The writer would have never gone for the Doctor of Ministry Degree. The writer had to be more than his father was. The writer succeeded his parents with education, becoming a Navy officer, and receiving his call to ministry. The writer's father modeled for him what it meant to be a man through working for thirty-four years at the chemical plant and Army Reserves. This is what was passed on to the writer from his dad as a part of the family but absent from the household during the writer's development years. Jesse Jackson Jr. went one-step above his father.

Malcolm X was previously known as Malcolm Little. His life was filled with drugs and zoot suits; he had no education and was relegated to the part of Black society where Black men who embodied what it meant to be reduced to poverty. If he had not found a mentor in Elijah Muhammad and the Nation of Islam, he would have never taken his rightful place in the world.

Until people know whose they are, God's child, and who they are, African or African American, they will continue to exist in the wilderness. Oppressed people do not realize the value of identity. It was only when Malcolm X knew whose he was, and who he was, that he could take his rightful place in the world. The writer suggests the church should strive to reinforce strong self-esteem within young Black men. When Malcolm X learned whose he was and who he was, drugs were no longer an influence in his life.

The writer sees Malcolm X as an emergent and positive role model. Early in his life, Malcolm X's image of Black men was negative due to the absent of a positive male role model. Ultimately, Malcolm X found himself living life behind prison bars because he did not have someone to model positive traits and behaviors for him to replicate.

What does history teach us about Rites-of-Passage for the African American male? The problem is moving from the African Scene to the American scene where the Rites-of-Passage were lost. We did not have the problem of single parent households; we did not have the problem with roles of parents; we did not have Black-on-Black crime, and we did not have epidemic problems with drugs. Rage, combined with frustration, fuels self-destructive behavior in the form of drug and alcohol abuse and criminal behavior. Externalizing rage in the form of anger and aggression directed toward acquaintances and family members can destroy loving relationships and friendships. Acting out aggression toward society will lead to incarceration within the criminal justice system.[21]

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was absence in the rearing of his children; Coretta raised them. In essence, although King was absent from the household on a regular basis, between he and his wife, they found an appropriate process to raise their children.

Biblical Foundation

From the biblical standpoint, the writer will address sources of support from the Old Testament; Jethro to Moses, Exodus 18:13-27. The Exodus tradition reads like a rite-of-passage. Israel's formation into a nation began through the intense experience in Egypt. As in a rite-of-passage story, Israel returns to Canaan from Egypt. In Exodus 18 Jethro became an important advisor to Moses at Sinai.[22]

The general content of this chapter seems clear enough: Verses 1-12 recount Jethro's acknowledgment of the God of Moses and verses 13-27 Moses' father-in-law's advice to him about dividing the labor. The existence of this record suggests the

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[21]White and Cone, *Black Man Emerging,* 62.

[22]William H. C. Propp, *Exodus 1-18 AB* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1999), 2.

historicity of such an encounter. Chapter 18 is purposefully situated in the context of the book. As Cassuto has outlined,[23] there is a striking degree of lexical overlap between this episode and the Amalekite episode in chapter 17. In 17:8, the Amalekites came and attacked; in 18:5-7, Jethro comes and greets. In both 17:9 and 18:25, men are chosen for some specific task.

In 17:12, Moses sits on a stone; in 18:13 he sits to judge. Moreover, both activities are said to commence on the next day (17:9; 18:13) and last all day until evening (17:12; 18:13-14). In both 17:12 and 18:18 Moses is said to be tired, with help provided in each instance. Such overlap indicates a connection between the two stories, as several commentators have noted.[24]Jethro the Midianite's encounter with Moses in the desert stands in contrast to the greeting he and the Israelites received from the Amalekites. Moreover, as we will see, a number of elements of the story connect it to both earlier and later portions of Exodus.

Old Testament

The writer will focus on the character of Jethro and how he mentored Moses. Moses was struggling with leading the Israelite people. After an encounter with God, Moses was chosen to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. Single handedly, Moses assumed the responsibility of overseer for the entire Hebrew nation.

Why are the people constantly coming to Moses for counsel? Moses on the other side of Mount Sinai is tending sheep, and Moses has not accepted his calling yet.

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[23]Umberto, Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1967), 212.

[24]Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus* , 211-12; Naham M. Sarna, *Exploring Exodus: The Heritage of Biblical Israel* (New York, NY: Schocken, 1986), 128-29.

So how is he doing all of this work? How is Jethro able to mentor Moses to be a better leader? After the escape from Egypt, Moses led the Israelites toward the burning bush locale so that they too could meet God. Moving on from the shore of the Red Sea, they traveled toward Mount Sinai where God would make a covenant with them. Along the way, they had numerous difficulties that tried Moses' leadership ability and patience, and tested the people's faith. Theses troubles also served to test the resourcefulness of God and to reveal the character of the Israelites.

Then the Amalekites fought the Israelites. Joshua led the counterattack, and the Israelites prevailed as long as Moses' arms were raises to God. This episode is notable because it introduces the Amlekites, who are a persistent Israelite enemy. The Amalekites receive the honor of being the archetypal Israelite enemy because they were the first to attack this new nation.

Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, met the Hebrews in the wilderness. Observing that Moses was exhausting himself by single-handedly administering the entire community, he convinced Moses to delegate all but the most difficult cases to subordinates. Jethro, called the priest of Midian, also made a most remarkable confession. He professed that God was greater than any other god because he delivered the people from Egyptian oppression. Then Jethro offered sacrifices to God. The writer is showing how outsiders, too, can perceive the greatness of Israel's God and worship him.[25]

Moses was born to Hebrew parents in Egyptian slavery, and bore an Egyptian name, as did several other Hebrews in the period. After unsuccessful efforts to alleviate the affliction of his people in their slavery, he fled into Sinai/Midian, married into the

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[25]Barry L. Bandstra, *Reading the Old Testament: An Introduction to the Hebrew Bible* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1999), 143-144.

priestly family of Jethro, and returned to lead his people out of Egypt. In the wilderness, he struggled to organize the community by means of religious covenant and law, and he led them to the verge of Canaan where he died. It is contended that Moses derived his belief in God, along with many cultic and legal practices, from his Midianite father-in-law. Jethro is called priest of Midian and joins a feast with the Israelites as they celebrate the deliverance from Egypt.[26]

When Jethro, Moses' father-in-law and priest of the Lord in Midian, heard everything that the Lord had done for Israel and how He had brought them out of the land of Egypt, he decided to visit Moses. He brought his daughter Zipporah, Moses' wife, with him and their two sons whom Moses had sent back home for safety just before he reached Egypt. Moses had named his first son, Gershom, meaning Homeless, for he said to himself, "I'm an alien in a foreign land" (Exodus 18:1-3). He had named his second son, Eliezer, meaning God Is My Helper, for he had said to himself, "God saved me from being killed by the king of Egypt."[27]

Therefore, Jethro came with Zipporah and her two sons near Sinai where Moses and the children of Israel had set up camp. He sent word ahead saying to Moses, "I'm coming to visit you, and I'm bringing with me your wife Zipporah and your two sons." Moses went to meet his father-in-law and to welcome his wife and two sons. He bowed before Jethro, and then hugged and kissed him as well as his wife and two sons. Moses' greeting of Jethro follows standard practice. Bowing down is a greeting to one who is of higher social standing and is an act of respect. The kiss on the cheek is the greeting of

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[26]Norman K. Gottwald, *The Hebrew Bible: A Socio-Literary Introduction* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1985), 193.

[27]Jack J. Blanco, *The Clear Word* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Hearld 2004), 87-88.

friendship.[28] They asked about each other's welfare, and then Moses took them back to camp and to his tent.

Moses told them everything that the Lord had done to Pharaoh and the Egyptians to free God's people. He also told them about the hardships they had met along the way and how the Lord had taken care of them. When Jethro and the family heard what the Lord had done for His people and how He had delivered them, they rejoiced. Then Jethro said to Moses, "Praise the Lord, who brought you safely out of Egypt and rescued you from Pharaoh's army! Praise the Lord, who delivered His people from slavery and set them free. This shows that the Lord is greater than all other gods are. The Egyptians had boasted of the power of their gods and treated the God of heaven with contempt"(Exodus 18:10-11).

Then Jethro took an animal for a burnt offering and other sacrifices. He offered them to the Lord in thanksgiving and for what He had done for Israel. He invited Moses, Aaron, and all the elders of Israel to come and join him for the sacred meal. Therefore, they sat down and ate together as an act of worship and praise to the Lord. Immediately after his conversion Jethro was able to play a helpful role in Israel by recommending the basic structure of the judicial system, a properly hierarchical arrangement that placed Moses at the top of the judicial pyramid as Israel's Supreme Court and established inferior courts/judges under him. [29] As N. Sarna and others have pointed out, the attribution of Israel's judicial system structure to a Midianite's advice can hardly have served any late interpolator's purpose, and thus it may be considered one of the indicators

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[28]J. H. Walton, V. H. Matthews, and M.W. Chavalas, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 2000), 93.

[29]D. K. Stuart, The New American Commentary *Vol. 2*: *Exodus* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2006), 414.

of the passage's authenticity and antiquity.[30] The next day Moses took his seat as judge to settle various disputes among the people, and he was kept busy from morning until night. In the ancient Near East as in many parts of the world still today, the job of judging civil and criminal disputes goes along with a leadership position.[31] To be a political or military leader was also to be a judicial leader required to render decisions in cases of controversy.[32]

When Jethro saw all that Moses was doing, he said to him, "You're going to kill yourself. You cannot possibly judge all these cases and keep it up. Look at all the people standing in line just to see you! Moreover, his only models would have been either the Egyptian system, where the pharaoh made himself available for any and all persons to see him in court, at least certain times during the year, or the Midianite model, where tribal leaders probably did something of the same.[33]Moses said to Jethro, "The people come to me to learn what to do and to know God's will for them. Whenever they disagree on something they come to me and I decide which one is right and which one is wrong and tell them what God's law says about it." A better translation would be "the people come to me to inquire of God," which connotes better Moses' intermediary role.[34] Good

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[30]N. Sarna, *Exodus*, JPS Torah Commentary (Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society, 1991), 100.

[31]Stuart, The New American Commentary, *Exodus*, 414.

[32]Part of the reason the military/political deliverers of Israel in the book of Judges were called *judges* (שֹׁפְטִים) was that they inevitably had to judge legal disputes even if that was not necessarily their primary purpose.

[33]The Amarna letters seem to confirm the availability of Pharaoh to be approached in his "court" by even the lowliest commoner, and it is hard to imagine how Moses and Aaron had access to Pharaoh unless by reason of his holding open court on occasion. See the note on 9:1–4.

[34]"Inquire" (דרשׁ) tends in a context like this one to bear the technical sense of "seek a revelatory answer from God," as in Isaiah 8:19; 31:1; Jeremiah 8:2; Ezekiel 14:3.

education involves preparatory instruction as well as concomitant instruction and follow-up instruction.[35]

Jethro said, "What you are doing for the people is not wrong, but what you are doing to yourself is not right. You are going to wear yourself out and discourage people from coming to see you. They are not going to keep standing in long lines for days at a time. In effect, Jethro's argument is an early version of the now popular legal saying "Justice delayed is justice denied.[36] Listen to me; I want to give you some advice. God will still bless you and help you. It is good that you are helping people and bringing their differences before the Lord. That is what you should be doing.

> You need to teach them what God says and explain to them how to live and what to do. However, you cannot go on like this. To preserve your strength, pick out some God-fearing men to help you, the kind who can be trusted and who will not be bribed. Then divide your leadership responsibilities among them. Put some in charge of thousands, others in charge of hundreds and still others in charge of fifties and tens.
>
> Let them serve as judges to handle more common problems and settle the less difficult cases among the people. The harder cases they can leave for you to handle. This will make it easier for you. You will not wear yourself out and you will be able to carry the strain of leadership much better. And the people will go home satisfied because they did not have to stand in line all day long just to see you." (Exodus 18:20-23)[37] What Jethro believed to constitute God's will for Moses and the Israelites was a trustworthy judicial hierarchy—trustworthy in that the judges at the "inferior" level would be selected and would be "capable men … who hate dishonest gain.[38]

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[35]Stuart, The New American Commentary, *Exodus*, 414.

[36]This maxim was formulated by William Gladstone, the British political leader (1809–1898).

[37]Blanco, *The Clear Word* , 87-88.

[38]On the term used in the passage for "dishonest gain" (בָּצַע, in this instance pointed pausally as בָּצַע) and its significance as an indicator of the familiarity of the Israelites with Egyptian legal standards, see C. Carmichael, "Joseph, Moses, and the Institution of the Israelite Judicature," *Go to the Land I Will Show You*: *Studies in Honor of Dwight S. Young* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1996), 15–26.

As perhaps a new convert, Jethro contributed to the community almost immediately. Seeing the congestion created by large numbers of people coming to Moses with legal disputes, he gave Moses some practical advice on delegating responsibility. The qualifications of those chosen were important: They were to fear God, be people of truth, and hate dishonest gain.[39] Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything he said. He chose capable men from each of the tribes of Israel and made them leaders and judges of the people.

He put some in charge of thousands, others in charge of hundreds and still others in charge of fifties and tens. These men took the less difficult cases and left the harder ones for Moses. Then Moses said good-bye to his father-in-law and Jethro returned to Midian. While this narrative ends with Jethro's return home, that seems to have been temporary as he appeared to help Israel again after their Sinai sojurn (Numbers 10:29-32).[40]

> Finally, the verse adds its evidence to that of various earlier hints that travel between Mount Sinai and Midian was not a matter of trailblazing pioneering but something relatively uncomplicated to accomplish.[41] The people who so recently have been disorganized slaves need organization and administration. They will need laws and regulations. But first they will need leaders who can give guidance and administer justice. And real leadership always begins with the delegation and distribution of responsibility.
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> Moses, caught up in the monumental task of emancipating his people, has been doing too much and delegating too little. An outsider can sometimes see this better. Jethro did, and tactfully suggested an organizational change to make for effective management and administering of justice. The father-in-law was concerned both for Moses' health and the dignity of his leadership under the burdens. Out of this modest family setting and concern was born the political organization of a new nation, God's Israel.

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[39]Catherine C. Kroeger, and Mary J. Evans, *The IVP Women's Bible Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), 38.

[40]Ibid., 38.

[41]Stuart, *The New American Commentary, Exodus.* ,419.

Jethro now makes his specific and highly constructive suggestion. "Choose" subordinate leaders who are men of faith who "fear God." They must be men of character and integrity. Then divide the people into units "of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens."[42]

Moses, himself a man of authority, respected the authority of Jethro. Authority has a way of becoming intoxicating. Authority should be invested in others prudently. Authority is a resource to be invested in others. People often think of authority as a position to be preserved. In fact, authority is a resource to be used up in empowering others to act more effectively.[43]

New Testament

The writer will also address sources of support from the New Testament; Jesus to Nicodemus John 3:1-10. Jesus explains to Nicodemus that religion knowledge and ethnicity are not a sufficient basis for a relationship with God; one must be born into his family by the Spirit. John often contrasts water rituals and the Spirit. Jesus as incarnate Wisdom is the only one fully qualified to reveal God and reconcile the world to him. A wealthy and prominent Nicodemus was known in Jerusalem in this period, though we cannot be sure that John means the same one.[44]

Nicodemus starts with a high compliment. You never know what Nicodemus agenda really was. Jesus never gives him a chance to share that. He had an agenda. Weather it was positive or negative was only left to speculation but he had an agenda. In that culture, it was more polite to talk about community and talk in terms of the community even if something happened singularly because everything you do represents community. The community observed Jesus from a distant.

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[42]F. H. Paschall and H. H. Hobbs, *The Teacher's Bible Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1972), 66.

[43]Earl D. Radmacher, Ronald B. Allen, and H. Wayne House, *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc. 1999), 119.

[44]Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1993), 269-270.

He wanted to see Jesus, but he went to talk to Him at night. Nicodemus said, "Teacher, we know that God has sent you because no one can work miracles like you unless God is with him" (John 3:2). Notice the low Christology. They see Jesus as only a teacher or Rabbi. They see Jesus as one of their own. They see a Rabbi as a teacher. One might come by night to avoid being seen, or because Jewish teachers who worked during the day could study only at night.[45]

The problem is you do not see Jesus teaching. What occasion Nicodemus visit? First, the cleansing of the temple was troubling. You cannot be a religious leader somebody attack the temple and you do not pay them a visit. Second one is you know that Nicodemus is not going to be accepted by Jesus because Jesus know the other side of him. And now after making that statement the writing gives us an example in the story of Nicodemus. By the end of this story, Jesus does not accept Nicodemus. Nicodemus just becomes a secret disciple, which is not a good thing in the Gospel of John. You cannot be a secret disciple. John does not approve of that.

And so the temple scene was the religionist leaders way of retaliating against Jesus by sending him Nicodemus. But Jesus knew that. So Nicodemus never gets a word across. Never gets a word out. Rabbi, low Christology, which means he sees Jesus as a human. Then he goes and says we know you are a teacher who has come from God not God but who has come from God. It sounds complimentary but in essence it is insulting to Jesus. It links you backs to signs. How people would only believe because of signs.

Nicodemus level of belief was not the level that was acceptable to the implied author. The implied author has various levels of faith and a person who believes in signs

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[45] **Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*, 269.**

only is at the bottom. In fact this comes back up again in the end of chapter twenty with Jesus giving Thomas the beatitudes. Thomas you believe me because you have you seen me. But blessed are those who have believed me but have not seen me. That is the highest level of faith, to believe without evidence.

Notice Jesus response is very brief. Jesus is saying all that is necessary and that is it. It you want to insult someone who claims to be one of your equals you do not beat around the bush. You go straight to the bush. Jesus introduces another subject. Nicodemus is talking religiously. Jesus talks spiritually. Pharisee was a feared and respected title. When the writer says respected not out of love but out of obligation. It is almost like how slaves had to obey their masters. They knew if they did not it would be consequences.

In essence, Jesus is saying to Nicodemus you are not all that you say you are. When Nicodemus came to Jesus not just because he was Jesus but Jesus did not need an introduction of who Nicodemus is. The narrator introduces Nicodemus to us. Nicodemus's initiation of the conversation with Jesus reminds us of some modern popular introductions of guest speakers at banquets that are geared to make them feel both welcome and accepted while announcing to the speaker and the audience that great words of wisdom are expected. In this case, however, the statement proves to be a perfect example of Nicodemus's ironical misunderstanding of Jesus.[46]

Jesus does not have an introduction in Nicodemus. But you can tell who he is because he had a three-piece suit on with necktie or bowtie his shoes were shine probably had a robe on with chevron bars. You could tell people's status by the way they dressed. You could tell a Pharisee they has tassels and all this stuff for you to tell they were

[46]P. D. Duke, *Irony in the Fourth Gospel* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox, 1985), 45–46.

religionist with real big Torah under his arm. No one can see the Kingdom of God without being born from above. That is a bad translation. The translators take the punch out of Jesus statement and as such you have to wonder why Nicodemus did not get it.

The Greek word anthen means from above and it means again. They take the punch line and this is what you call Johannine misunderstanding. What the writer means by that John fourth gospel uses this motif literary device called misunderstanding. The writer tells us what it means being born from above all Nicodemus heard was anthen. He had to make a choice from above or you must be born again which is still trying to solve the misunderstanding. He is telling Nicodemus who has studied the Torah, Mishnah, Talmud, (commentaries on the Mishnah 613 laws you will find in the Torah) Targums, (commentaries on the Talmud).

Nicodemus was versed in all of this. He had the Hebrew Scriptures probably the Septuagint memorized. It is not about just reading it. It is about getting it inside of them. Here is a man who has graduated from Harvard. In essence Jesus told him all of the theological, historical, cultural, knowledge you have is gone because you lack the basic.

You cannot see. The reason you cannot see you have not been born. Jesus was talking about above but Nicodemus takes the lower meaning, which means again. Watch his response this shows the beginning of a spiritual life with God, which begins with the eyes. Not these eyes where you can see physical things but the spiritual eye the writer likes to call it the mind's eye. If you not born again you cannot see. You are blinded. Here you are the blind leading the blind.

Let us follow Nicodemus response verse four. Nicodemus asked, "But how can a man enter into his mother's womb a second time and be born again? How can a man

who is already old start life all over again? That's impossible" (John 3:4). What Nicodemus was proposing was a reformation based upon a second birth from his mother's womb. In a sense, Nicodemus was trying to trick Jesus. He was seriously trying to seek knowledge.

The problem is some people think they can be born again as an old person sixty four inches tall one hundred sixty pounds to get back into my mother's womb and then be born again. Nicodemus is really trying to figure out within himself how can that be. The first birth got me to be a Pharisee I am supposed to go back in there. It is impossible task. He is trying to wrestle with the flesh.

Being born again has nothing to do with the flesh. It has to do with being born from above. Jimmy Carter in the seventies says, you have to be a born again Christian. Jimmy Carter is well polished Nicodemus. If you Christian you should be born from above.

This just not an indictment on Nicodemus and religionist leaders of his day this is what happens in the church. The church is stuck on trying to reform itself not transforming itself. You transform by taking your sight off materiality and fixing on spirituality. Jesus was talking about spiritual birth. You are dead spiritually that is what he said to Nicodemus.

He was old. Can you imagine telling a pastor of forty to fifty years you are spiritually dead? You need to be born again. Jesus makes it even deeper he goes and says he locks in on the word enter. Nicodemus was puzzled about entering a second time into his mother's womb.

Jesus was fixed on not entering second time in your mother's womb but entering into the Kingdom of God. That is something you do not hear often in the church. Enter into the Kingdom of God or the reign of God where God lives. The Pharisee had access to the temple just like everybody else. Jesus was not talking about the temple.

Jesus connects this whole scenario with two were the religionist write and spiritual write. Every religionist write we have should be backed up with a spiritual write we have. You can go down in water, which is this whole idea of being born because you are born of water. Jesus is saying as old you probably were baptized with physical water but you were never baptized with the spirit. You got half of the deal. With half of the deal they let you lead unless you force yourself as a leader.

One of the questions the writer would ask if the writer wanted to place someone in Christian ministry particularly in leadership position is tell me something about the reign of God. It is a place where most Christians have not been. To put it in the words of Billy Graham ninety-five percent of Christians live carnal lives. In essence, Nicodemus was one hundred percent carnal.

What is born of the flesh is flesh. First indictment you are dead spiritually. Second indictment you are fleshly. There is no secret when you look out into the controversies in the church primarily with issues of the flesh. The second level of knowledge to break is getting beyond the flesh of our leaders.

The church claims their human. You can be human and spiritual. The problem is you cannot run a business it seems by being spiritual. Therefore, we keep people coming religiously. The church should have people coming spiritually.

The remedy is to teach Christians that not only should we have five senses physically but also we have five senses spiritually. David says, "O taste and see that the LORD is good" (Ps 34:8). That is a spiritual statement. We were all called spiritually. There was an inner voice speaking to us. The feeling is compassion yet spiritually we have compassion. Smelling in the spiritual sense is discernment. Discern right from wrong true and false. The remedy in one word is to empower.

To empower in John chapter 3 is to embarrass. You empower through teaching. The church turned corners and it focused on preaching. Preaching is exhortation to get people to do what they ordinarily would not do. However, teaching you find out where your students are.

You have an opportunity to talk in the teaching moment. Therefore, you need the opportunity to listen to Nicodemus and to evaluate where they are. The hardest thing is knowing where they are is to have the spirit of Christ which is gentleness and handling that do not ignore it. We will over look a person spirit condition if they giving to the church. One way to get beyond that is by teaching about giving not to the church, not to the pastor, but every time we give we put it into the hands of God a spiritual exercise.

Take that which is physical and turn it into the spiritual. The work of the minister is not to just spiritualize but to recognize that which is spiritual, ritual, or traditional and unpack the spirituality of it and by doing so you empower them. Nicodemus thought he did not have to do any work and just because you born into a culture does not mean you born into salvation. You are born only physically. You have to be born spiritually. Nicodemus would only believe because of the signs.

Doubt is healthy skepticism but it should not stop us from being spiritual. The writer is examining the scriptures by doing close reading of the scriptures, which is a spiritual discipline. The writer, suggest we need to feed our spirits. The preached word is almost like going to get fast food. Religion wants to make us visible.

The spirit you cannot see, you cannot touch with the natural hands, you cannot touch it. Why Christian do not access those spiritual blessings because they cannot see them? How do you see them you have to meet God? Not join the church, not join the choir, not preach, but you have to meet God. The goal is to meet God. That is the whole purpose of our faith.

Nothing else matters. The writer does what he does because he loves the presence of God. The writer wants to get others in that presence of God. God would help us face the fear of responsibility and God alone. We are in a quest for titles but we are not in a quest for towels being servants.

Towels are servants. Servants have only one purpose is to please the master and nobody else but everybody wants a title or position. Position does not bring you closer to God. Towels bring you closer to God.

"So don't be shocked when I tell you that you must be born from above to belong to God's kingdom" (Jn 3:7). The first step is explaining the new birth from above. If you want to disciple someone this is where you start. You tell them a disciple is someone who practice spiritual disciplines and then goes on to teach others. Disciple is someone who coaches others in spiritual disciplines.

"How this happens is beyond human understanding. It's like the wind blowing the trees. You can see the effects of it, but you can't see the wind itself, the place where it

came from or where it's going. That's how it is with the person who is born spiritually; he cannot point to something people can see and say, "This is what did it" (John 3:8). Jesus unpacks what he means being born from above. When you do something spiritual it is hard but you empowered by God to see the need and you fulfill the need. The church has set places where you can go. Spiritual person the sky is the limit. The best way to describe it is the wind.

Jesus talking to Nicodemus is almost like going back to elementary school. You can know the law and not be spiritual. In a world of spirituality you are living in a world of grace. In a world of law you are living in a world of the flesh not the spirit. Jesus is telling Nicodemus you are not qualified to be a teacher of Israel.

Finally, the laypeople of the church are looking for the kind of life the person lives in the sermon. We camouflage ourselves in the Sunday morning hour we hide it behind music, speaking skills and our words are not of conviction as a result the church do not change and we do not change. The church is doing business as usual. God works through us.

The biggest problem with Nicodemus is he cannot humble himself. He cannot become anything in the sight of God. You have to become nothing in the sight of God so you can increase. Nicodemus did not want to come in the day because light would have exposed him. If he would be exposed in the day other people would have been around and it would have been awful. He would not have been a secret disciple. He would have been a full fledge disciple had it came in the day.

The passage begins with dark and ends with dark. Nicodemus is the representation of darkness. Religion is a Sunday morning affair but spirituality is twenty-

four hours affair. The problem is if you are spiritual you probably want find a church. The preaching in the church should solely be about empowerment.

What the writer means about empowerment is a message of hope. The church can do something spiritually. As a leader, you have to lead them to where they need to go. The goal is to get people to see something they had not seen before. The answer is to take the church through a series without a time limit to get them into the Word to let them see it for themselves. The question is how can these things be?

Theological Foundation

The writer plans to consider the theological foundations and investigate the theological precedence for older men working with younger men. The theological standpoint the writer will address consists of two theological understanding: Black theology and liberation theology.

Black theology is the interplay between the pain of oppression and the promise of liberation found in the Bible, on one hand, and a similar existence experienced by African Americans and poor people today. Black theology of liberation means thinking about how the spirit of liberation works with poor Black folks spiritually and materially, individually and collectively, and privately and publicly. The foundation for black theology has always existed whenever and wherever God has chosen to co labor with the poor for justice. Moreover, black theology analyzes specific events and times when God gives communities at the bottom of society the freedom to choose life when they live as full human beings. In addition, black theology presupposes that working people and the

poor possess an active faith that inspires them to practice freedom as a major definition of what it means to be a full human.[47]

In addition, Cone was one of two people in the world to first write books on liberation theology. Perhaps no one else has been as clear and sharp in defining the preferential option for the poor than Gustavo Gutierrez, one of the world's leaders of liberation theology.[48] Liberation theology is an interpretive approach to Scripture historically rooted in the Latin American social context of poverty and oppression. It calls for Christian action on behalf of the marginalized majority. Liberation theology is guided by two fundamental principles. First, theology as critical reflection that follows a prior commitment to liberation, thus, theology as a second act; and second the articulation of theology from the perspective of the poor and oppressed.[49]

Black Theology

Black theology is not a gift of the Christian gospel dispensed to slaves; rather, it is an appropriation that Black slaves made of the gospel given by their white oppressors. Black theology had been nurtured, sustained, and passed on in Black churches in their various ways of expression. It is has dealt with all the ultimate and violent issues of life and death for a people despised and degraded.[50]

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[47]Dwight N. Hopkins, *Heart and Head: Black Theology-Past, Present, and Future* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 2002), 29.

[48]Ibid., 29.

[49]Mark E. Taylor, *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible: Volume 3* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2008), 653.

[50]James Cone and Gayraud Wilmore, *Black Theology: A Documentary History*, Vol. 1 (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Press, 1993), 37.

The Black church has not only nurtured Black people but enabled them to survive brutalities that ought not to have been inflicted on any community of men. Black theology is the product of Black Christian experienced and reflection. It comes out of the past. It is strong in the present. Moreover, we believe it is redemptive for the future.[51]

Since all theologies arise out of a communal experience with God. Cone says, that the black community seeks to express its theology in language that speaks to the contemporary mood of Black people.[52] By speaking to the mood of Black people, God can be approached in ways that affirm the authentic Black experience withstanding their plight.

According to Cone, the religion of Black Power teaches love rather than hatred. It teaches that love and charity begins at home; it begins with ourselves. Therefore, Black men must build their own beloved community. Those who see the goal of a Black community not being consistent with the universal understanding of community must recognize the fact that Black men in America have long been encouraged to disdain their community no less than themselves.[53]

The call for communal identification among the Black outcast of America had had observable impact and will probably increase in force. It is the closest thing to a sense of religious vocation that some of the current Black colleges and graduate students know. In order for Black men to reemerge as a power in the community will occur through resurrection. This affords Black men to reinvent themselves and revitalize their communities and self-identify with a Black-oriented world. This new Black man must

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[51]Ibid., 37.

[52]Ibid.

[53]Ibid., 42.

come partly from a new vision of himself; the old vision must be put to rest and buried so that resurrection can take place.[54]

According to H. Wayne House, Black theology is not interested in Western discussions about God. Black theologians believe that the questions about God's essence and attributes are fruitless. Instead, they are concerned about discovering a God who will involve Himself in the Black experience and deliver them.[55]

Black people have heard enough about God. What they want to know is what God has to say about the Black condition. Or, more importantly, what is he doing about it? What is his relevance in the struggle against the forces of evil, which seek to destroy Black being? These are the questions that must shape the character of the norm of Black Theology.[56]

From House's perspective, Black theology's dominant perspective on God is God in action, delivering the oppressed because of His righteousness. He is to be seen, not in the transcendent way of Greek philosophy, but immanent, among His people. He is doing something, as illustrated in the Old Testament when He delivered His people Israel from Egypt's bondage.[57]

In 1969, the Committee of Black Church Men put out this statement:

> Black theology is a theology of black liberation. It seeks to plumb the Black condition in the light of God's revelation in Jesus Christ, so that the Black community can see that the gospel is commensurate with the achievements of black humanity. Black theology is a theology of 'blackness.' It is the affirmation

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[54]Ibid., 49.

[55]H. Wayne House, "An Investigation into Black Liberation Theology", (accessed May 2013) http://www.monergism.com/blackliberation.html.

[56]Ibid.

[57]Ibid.

> of Black humanity that emancipates black people from White racism, thus providing authentic freedom for both white and Black people. It affirms the humanity of white people in that it says 'No' to the encroachment of white oppression.[58]

From the conception of Black and Black liberation theology, a long list of Black thinkers have helped to shape the landscape of the empowerment of Black culture. It was not long before slave theology gave rise to black activism. A few of these personalities are briefly mentioned here. Nat Turner (1800-1831) was the most notorious slave preacher who ever lived on American soil. Turner's hatred of slavery propelled him to seek freedom by violence. Indeed, Turner killed nearly sixty white people before being captured and hanged in September 1831. This violent revolt marked the beginning of the Black struggle for liberation.

Marcus Garvey (1887-1940) is regarded by many as the apostle of Black theology in the United States of America. Martin Luther King, Jr., said Garvey was the first man on a mass scale and level to give millions of Negroes a sense of dignity and destiny and make the Negro feel he is somebody. Garvey was one of the first to speak of seeing God through Black spectacles.

Howard Thurman, in his book *Jesus and the Disinherited* (1949) saw black life paralleling Jesus' life because His poverty identified Him with the poor masses. Thurman also noted that Jesus was a member of a minority group (the Jews) in the midst of a larger and controlling dominant group (the Romans). Thurman thus drew many applications for the black experience from the life of Jesus.

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[58]Black Liberation Theology, (accessed May 2013) http://www.discoverthenetworks. org/view SubCategory.asp?id=796.

Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-1968) was America's most visible civil rights leader from 1955 until his assassination in April 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee. Though he cannot be called a formal participant in the Black theology movement, he nevertheless roused the conscience of Black America to passionate commitment to liberation.

King was an advocate of Ghandian nonviolent social change. Through nonviolent suffering, King believed that Blacks would not only liberate themselves from the necessity of bitterness and the feeling of inferiority toward whites but would also prick the conscience of whites and liberate them from a feeling of superiority. To some, King's assassination indicated that nonviolence as a means of liberation had failed and that perhaps a more revolutionary theology was needed.

Albert Cleage was one of the more militant Black writers of the 1960s. His claim to fame was *The Black Messiah*, a 1968 collection of sermons in which he set forth his brand of black nationalism. Cleage rejected the Pauline books in the New Testament. He said that—in contrast to the black Messiah—there was a spiritualized Jesus constructed by the apostle Paul who never knew Jesus and who modified his teaching to conform to the pagan philosophers of the white gentiles. We, as Black Christians suffering oppression in a white man's land, do not need the individualistic and otherworldly doctrines of Paul and the white man.[59]

Although intended to be a vehicle of Black empowerment and self-identity, Arthur Anthony Bradley says in his book, *Black Liberation Theology: The Bible and the Black Experience in America,* Black Liberation Theology, originally intended to help the Black community, may have actually hurt many Blacks by promoting racial tension,

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[59]Ron Rhodes, "Black Theology, Black Power, and The Black Experience", (accessed May 2013) http://home.earthlink.net/~ronrhodes/BlackTheology.html.

victimology, and Marxism which ultimately leads to more oppression. As the failed War on Poverty has exposed, the best way to keep the Blacks perpetually enslaved to government as daddy is to preach victimology, Marxism, and to seduce Blacks into thinking that upward mobility is someone else's responsibility in a free society.[60]

Liberation Theology

James Cone says in his book, *God of the Oppressed*, because human liberation is God's work of salvation in Jesus Christ, its source and meaning cannot be separated from Christology's source and content. Cone says that there is no liberation independent of Jesus' past, present, and future coming. He is the ground of our present freedom to struggle and the source of our hope that the vision disclosed in our historical fight against oppression will be fully realized in God's future. Liberation is not an object but the project of freedom wherein the oppressed realize that their fight for freedom is a divine right of creation.[61]

Strictly speaking, Ron Rhodes defined liberation theology as a family of theologies including the Latin American, Black, and feminist varieties. All three respond to some form of oppression: Latin American liberation theologians say their poverty-stricken people have been oppressed and exploited by rich, capitalist nations. Black liberation theologians argue that their people have suffered oppression at the hands of racist whites. Feminist liberation theologians lay heavy emphasis upon the status and liberation of women in a male-dominated society.[62]

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[60]Anthony B. Bradley, "The Marxists Roots of Liberation Theology" [accessed May 2013], http://www.acton.org/pub/commentary/2008/04/02/marxist-roots-black-liberation-theology.

[61]James Cone, *God of the Oppressed* (1975; reprint, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007), 127.

Liberation theology begins with the premise that all theology is biased—that is, particular theologies reflect the economic and social classes of those who developed them. Accordingly, the traditional theology predominant in North America and Europe is said to perpetuate the interests of white, North American/European, and capitalist males. This theology allegedly supports and legitimates a political and economic system—democratic capitalism, which is responsible for exploiting and impoverishing the Third World.[63] Like Bonhoeffer, liberation theologians say theology must start with a view from below; that is, with the sufferings of the oppressed. Within this broad framework, different liberation theologians have developed distinctive methodologies for doing theology.[64]

Gustavo Gutierrez, author of *A Theology of Liberation*, provides us with a representative methodology. Like other liberationists, Gutierrez rejects the idea that theology is a systematic collection of timeless and culture-transcending truths that remains static for all generations. Rather, theology is in flux; it is a dynamic and ongoing exercise involving contemporary insights into knowledge, humanity, and history. Gutierrez emphasizes that theology is not just to be learned, it is to be done. In his thinking, praxis is the starting point for theology. Praxis (from the Greek *prasso*: "to reflect and to act") involves revolutionary action on behalf of the poor and oppressed—and out of this, theological perceptions will continually emerge. The theologian must therefore be immersed in the struggle for transforming society and proclaim his message

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[62]Ron Rhodes, "Christian Revolution in Latin America: The Changing Face of Liberation Theology", (accessed May 2013), http://home.earthlink.net/~ronrhodes/Liberation.html.

[63]Ibid.

[64]Ibid.

from that point. In the theological process, then, praxis must always be the first stage; theology is the second stage. Theologians are not to be mere theoreticians, but practitioners who participate in the ongoing struggle to liberate the oppressed.[65]

Cone says that fellowship with God is the beginning and the end of human liberation. The liberated person is the one who encounters God in faith, that is, in conviction and trust that one's true humanity is actualized in God. Similar to Gutierrez, praxis and working on a relationship with God is synonymous. Cone goes on to say that to affirm that liberation is an expression of the image of God is to say not only whom God is but also whom I am and who my people are. Liberation is knowledge of self; it is a vocation to affirm who I am created to be. Ultimately, the purpose of freedom is to create it for others. Therefore, we cannot claim to be liberated or in the process of liberation in the Christian sense, if the structure and meaning of liberation are not derived from the oppressed community in its struggle of freedom. No one can truly be free until all are liberated.[66]

Liberation theology as it usually comes to us seems more indebted to Marx than to Moses. Yet the main problem with liberation theology is that it does not go far enough. When the Bible—in particular, Jesus—speaks of liberation, there is much more at stake. And it is for this reason, among others, that evangelicals should adhere to a liberation theology of our own. And we should frame that theology with religion, morality, and spirituality—the three greatest oppressors humanity has ever known.[67]

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[65]Ibid.

[66]Cone, *God of the Oppressed,* 134-135.

[67]Mark Galli, Christianity Today, "A Fully Biblical Liberation Theology" [accessed may 2013] http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2011/october/biblical-liberation-theology.html.

To be sure, you cannot have a Christian life without religion. The Bible recognizes that life in God has no meaning if it is not embedded in religious activity such as Scripture study, worship, and ritual. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus assumed that the devout life includes prayer, fasting, and almsgiving (Matt. 6). The Bible shows that Jesus was a man of prayer (Mk 1:35) and a regular church attender: "And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day ..." notes Luke early in Jesus' ministry (4:16, ESV). At the same time, the Bible can talk about religion as if it were a curse. We are not just talking about false religion or idol worship, against which prophets like Isaiah waxed eloquent and sarcastic (Is 44:9-17).[68]

[68]Ibid.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

This chapter will discuss the process by which the Rites-of-Passage model was developed and implemented, components of the model, the foundational ideology, and the design of the project. The objective of this project was to help develop a Rites-of-Passage program for males. This Rites-of- Passage model was implemented to encourage the elder men of the church to design a program for Black male youth. In order for the elders to be motivated, there had to be spiritual principles learned to radically challenge them in the areas of character, authority, the attitude of nurture, and responsibility. The model consisted of informal meetings during the Men's Locker Room Session to discuss the issues facing Black men. From this event, a core group of potential leaders were enlisted for a five-session Bible study.

Each session consisted of a spiritual principle. The topics covered were character, authority, the attitude of nurture, and responsibility. Each session consisted of teaching, dynamic interaction, role-play, and follow-up homework. The instruments used for this project involved three strategies to motivate the elders to develop a rites-of- passage program. Those three strategies were: (1) Journal, (2) Interview, and (3) Bible study.

Structure of the Model

The components of the model were implemented over a period of five weeks; the following were the components that consisted within the model.

The Journal

The most basic purpose of journaling is to express one's thoughts in written form. Writing is what brings clarity, and journaling was the process used to express participant's thoughts in written form. The greatest barrier to journaling is the fear of writing, but journaling is not about writing well. It is about writing your thoughts down, no matter how scattered or messy they are. Your thoughts do not have to be true! What matters is that you write them down.

Instructions for Journaling:

1. Bring your Journal to every Bible study session.
2. Jot down ideas, comments, and thoughts as it relates to the teaching during or after each session.
3. Be sure to jot down ideas, thoughts, questions that arise during your daily routine, prayer time, and personal Bible study.

Interviews

Some participants were be asked to participate in video interviews. This interview will be short and the interviewees were asked to share their experience of the project from beginning to end.

Bible Study

The five-session Bible study began on October 25, 2012. There were twelve men who participated in the Bible study. These men ranged in ages from early twenties to late sixties. The men were recruited from the Men's Locker room ministry. They were recruited based on their willingness to serve.

Measuring the Results

The project's effectiveness was tested through the number of men involved in the five-session Bible study, journals, and interviews, which concluded the entire project. Pre- and post-test were assessed to find trends in the written and interview responses. The data was also assessed to identify growth in understanding the spiritual principles from the participants.

The research model chosen for this study was primarily a qualitative case study approach. It involved selecting a core group of men to participate in a Bible study. These men were identified as ministry leaders among the men at Mount Pisgah Baptist Church.

Summary

The design of this project was to motivate the elders to develop a Rites-of - Passage program for Black males. The steps taken in this process were journals, interviews, and Bible study. The following chapter will explain the project implementation and its impact.

CHAPTER FIVE

FIELD EXPERIENCE

Project Implementation

This project was implemented over a five-week period. The objective of this project is to help develop a rites-of-passage program for males. This rites-of-passage model was implemented to encourage the elders in the ministry to design a rites-of - passage program for black male youth. In order for the elders to be motivated, there must be spiritual principles to radically challenge them in the areas of character, authority, the attitude of nurture, and responsibility. The model consisted of informal meetings during the Men's Locker Room Session to discuss issues facing Black men. From this event, a core group of potential leaders was enlisted for a five-session Bible study.

Bible Study

An orientation session was held on October 25, 2012. At this orientation session a pre-test and survey was given to the participants to get demographic data as well as to their gauge their knowledge and experience of the topics for the study. A copy of the pre-test and survey can be found in Appendix A and B. The demographic data breakdown was as follows.

1. Marital status: there were twenty-eight participants who were single, twenty-eight participants who were married, and five participants who had experienced divorce.

2. Age: there was fourteen participants between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five, sixteen participants between the ages of twenty-six and forty, twenty-four participants between the ages forty-one and sixty, and twenty-nine participants between the ages of sixty-one and above.

3. Race: there were seventy-eight participants who were African-American/Black.

4. Type of Home: there were fifty-one participants who were raised in two parent home, twenty-four participants who were raised in single parent home, two participants the mother was absent, and eight participants the father was absent.

5. Children: sixty-four participants answered yes to having children and eighteen answered no to having children.

6. Involved: twenty participants were involved with Boy Scouts, one participant who was involved with Promise Keepers, seventeen participants were involved in the Boys & Girl Club, and twenty-seven participants were involved in Church Youth Ministry.

7. Mentored: forty participants answered yes to being mentored, and thirty-five participants answered no to being mentored.

8. Personal need for Mentoring: thirty participants answered yes for personal need for mentoring, and forty-two answered no for personal mentoring.

9. Black Men group activities: fifty-five participants answered yes for group activities, and nineteen-answered no for group activities.

10. Mentoring Programs: seventy-two participants answered yes for mentoring programs, and three participants answered no for mentoring programs.

11. Rite-of-Passage Program in Community: sixty-seven participants answered yes for Rites-of-Passage program in community, and six participants answered no for Rites-of-Passage program in the community.

12. Participated in Rites-of-Passage Program: eighteen participants answered yes to participating in Rites-of-Passage Program, and fifty-five participants answered no to participating in Rites-of- Passage Program.

13. Volunteer in Rites-of -Passage Program: sixty-one participants answered yes to volunteering to be involved in a Rites of Passage Program designed to mentor, and thirteen participants answered no to volunteering to be involved in a Rites-of-Passage Program designed to mentor.

14. Church Leadership role in Rite-of-Passage: seventy participants answered yes to the church taking the leadership role in providing Rites-of-Passage, and four-answered no to the church taking the leadership role in providing Rites-of-Passage.

The author served as the facilitator for each of the Bible studies. Each Bible study began with prayer followed by a forty-five minute teaching and fifteen minutes of questions, answers, and reflections. The complete Bible Study and material can be found in Appendix C. Each Bible study dealt with a specific characteristic. At the first Bible study, the participants were given a composition book for journaling and reflection. The participants then turned in all composition books on the day of the culminating ceremony and interviews. This was done to give participants time to reflect on the topics from the Bible study and at a convenient time, rather than rushing at the end of Bible studies to complete journals.

Character

The topic of the first Bible study was character. The journal contained spiritual principles that related to character and a challenge for our day. The first part asked participants to identify wisdom, integrity, honesty, and moral purity/leadership. The second part that related to character asked participants to identify what characteristic makes a successful mentor in the Rites-of-Passage Program. Seven out of nine participants completed the journal. Some of the responses on what characteristic makes a successful mentor for Rites-of-Passage are listed below.

- The Bible defines character as any behavior or activity that reflects the character of God. Genesis tells us that God created man in his own image, meaning that we were created to act in accordance to his will. We say our character is exhibiting the *Fruits of the Spirit* as stated in Galatians 5:22-23

but the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such is no law."[1]

- The demonstration of a warm and pleasant personality that draws people to you rather than away from you.
- Character is an attribute that makes up a person…something that set you apart from another person.[2]
- What/How you act when no one is looking but you and God.[3]
- Character is the sum total of what we are.[4]
- Character qualities that identify you good or bad, moral or immoral, or trait you exhibit.[5]

Nine individuals attended this Bible study. After a period of prayer, each member of the Bible study received a copy of that sessions Bible study as exhibited in Appendix C. The author led the group in a discussion on character: *Barnabas: Character that Comes Alongside Others.*

The main text for Bible study was Acts 4:36; 9:27-28; 11:24-30. The main goal of this Bible study was to demonstrate character that comes alongside through character that makes a difference, displays a heart of integrity, and generosity. Character that makes a difference sees beyond the fears of others to see people for who they are in Christ, and character that makes a difference encourages believers to use skills to meet the needs of others. The character that was used was Barnabas who was a great example of character

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[1]Journal response, Bible study reflections, collected by author November 29, 2012, Dayton, OH.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid.

that comes alongside others and who provided necessary mentoring to the Apostle Paul as he engaged his mission as a believer in Jesus Christ.

Authority

The topic of the second Bible study was authority. The journal contained spiritual principles that related to authority and a challenge for our day. The first part asked participants to identify power, vulnerability, and confidentiality. The second part that related to authority asked participants to identify what characteristic makes a successful mentor in the Rites- of- Passage Program. Seven out of nine participants completed the journal. Some of the participant responses on what characteristic makes a successful mentor in the Rites -of- Passage are listed below.

- The power to give instructions, influence or command.[6]
- Position to be in charge and maintain responsibility, power and respect.[7]
- This is moving in the power of the Holy Spirit. This is with confidence, love, boldness and at times forcefulness.[8]
- Authority is having the power to exercise the direction or to command or enforce laws, policies, positions, rules or regulations.[9]
- One definition of authority is 'the right or power to require obedience. Usage in New Testament: The Greek word translated 'authority' is exousia= rightful, actual, and unimpeded powers to act, or to possess, control, use, dispose of, something or somebody. The word signifies power that is in some sense lawful, the stress being on the rightfulness of power really held or possessed. Sometimes used in a general secular sense to describe self-control (Acts 5:4).[10]

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[6]Journal response, Bible study reflections, collected by author November 29, 2012, Dayton, OH.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Ibid.

Nine individuals attended this Bible study. After a period of prayer, each member of the Bible study received a copy of that sessions Bible study as exhibited in Appendix C. The author led the group in a discussion on authority: "*Spiritual Authority and an Open Heart/Qualities Needed in Ministry*." The main text for Bible study was 2 Timothy 1:1-7. The main goal of this Bible study was to demonstrate spiritual authority and an open heart/qualities needed for ministry that makes a difference, displays a spirit of power, spirit of love, and spirit of self-discipline. The character that was used was Timothy who was a great example of spiritual authority and an open heart.

Attitude of Nurture

The topic of the third Bible study was attitude of nurture. The journal contained spiritual principles that related to attitude of nurture and a challenge for our day. The first part asked participants to identify self-control, love, and nurture. The second part that related to attitude of nurture asked participants to identify what characteristic makes a successful mentor in the Rites-of-Passage Program. Seven out of nine participants completed the journal. Some of the participant responses on what characteristic makes a successful mentor in the Rites-of-Passage are listed below.

- Attitude of nurture is having a caring heart to help bring someone up. Coming along side of someone lost. "[11] Attitude of nurture is having the presence of mind to lead and guide our young people through specific actions and deeds. Understanding the tools of self-control, identity, love, value and nurture will give us a better attitude.[12]

[11]Journal response, Bible study reflections, collected by author November 29, 2012, Dayton, OH.

[12]Ibid.

- Attitude of nurture is when you take on the attitude of caring for someone. This caring is done by demonstrating love. The point of this is that you take on an attitude to try to make a difference in someone life.[13]

- Nurture is the act of providing the proper understanding and training for your children or other individuals you are in fellowship/relationship with. Here we mean bringing them along side beside you in the understanding, development, implantation and practices of Christ'-like living. Nurture also means controlled disciplining (i.e., always in love). Nurture means leading by example; meeting and coming along beside others where they are; and never using a condescending attitude![14]

Nine individuals attended this Bible study. After a period of prayer, each member of the Bible study received a copy of that sessions Bible study as exhibited in Appendix C. The author led the group in a discussion on attitude of nurture: "*John Mark: Character Makes a Comeback/Attitude of Nurture*." The main text for Bible study was Ephesians 6:4. The main goal of this Bible study was to demonstrate John Mark—we know him as Mark—is a person God molded into a faithful servant leader, although he failed, he is one of the best known characters of the New Testament, the Apostle Paul. John Mark is an example of how God develops character in those who allow Him to work through what may be painful and embarrassing choices. God used a godly mother, a nurturing home, the community of faith, and the Holy Spirit to mold the character of this young follower of Jesus. Nurture KJV translation (Eph 6:4) of the Greek *paideia* (disciple, instruction). The noun occurs elsewhere in the Pauline corpus only once (2 Tm 3:16), which relates that all Scripture is profitable for "training (*paideia*) in righteousness." To bring up children "in the training and instruction of the Lord" (Eph 6:4 HCSB) is to discipline and

[13]Ibid.

[14]Ibid.

correct them as the Lord would.[15] The character that was used was John Mark who was a great example of attitude of nurture.

Responsibility

The topic of the fourth Bible study was responsibility. The journal contained spiritual principles that related to responsibility and a challenge for our day. The first part asked participants to identify promise, accountability, and socialization. The second part that related to responsibility asked participants to identify what characteristic makes a successful mentor in the Rites- of -Passage Program. Seven out of nine participants completed the journal. Some of the participant responses on what characteristic makes a successful mentor in the Rites-of-Passage are listed below.

- Responsibility is taking on a tasks, duty, job or whatever you agree to in order to make it successful. The responsibility agreement can be written or verbal, based on the terms by the two parties.[16]
- Responsibility is being accountable to someone or a specific task.[17]
- The Bible is clear about a man's responsibility to exercise spiritual maturity and spiritual leadership. Of course, this spiritual maturity takes time to develop, and it is a gift of the Holy Spirit working within the life of the believer. The disciplines of the Christian life, including prayer and serious Bible study, are among the means God uses[18]

Nine individuals attended this Bible study. After a period of prayer, each member of the Bible study received a copy of that sessions Bible study as exhibited in Appendix C. The author led the group in a discussion on responsibility: "*God's System of*

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[15]C. Brand, C. Draper, A. England, S. Bond, E. R. Clendenen & T. C. Butler (Eds.), *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), 1201.

[16]Journal response, Bible study reflections, collected by author November 29, 2012, Dayton, OH.

[17]Ibid.

[18]Ibid.

Responsibility: The Single Parent, the Family, the Church." The main text for Bible study was 2 Timothy 1:5; 1 Timothy 5:4,8, 16. The main goal of this Bible study was to demonstrate that Paul's spiritual son Timothy was the product of a single-parent home, as far as we can determine? If Timothy's father was not physically absent, he was at least spiritually absent, for the faith Timothy had was the result of his godly mother and grandmother (2 Tim 1:5). Even if there is not a godly man in your home, God can take up the slack. How could Timothy become a man of God when he did not have a male influence in his life? But at the right time God gave Timothy a Paul, a godly father figure and example, somebody who would give the male influence he needed at the time he needed it.[19] The character that was used was Timothy who was a great example of responsibility.

[19]Tony Evans, *Speaks Out on Single Parenting* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1995), 25-40.

CHAPTER SIX

REFLECTIONS, SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In Chapter six, the researcher summarizes and reflects on the project. This chapter is the researcher's reflections of the implementation of the overall results of this project. The appendix has examples of surveys, personal interviews, journals, and Bible studies used in this project. Finally, a bibliography of resources is provided for this project.

The purpose of this project was to discuss the effects absentee fathers had on the life of young boys and youth. It sought to motivate elders to develop a Rites -of -Passage program in Mount Pisgah Baptist Church where older males can learn some biblical characteristics. The Black church is not helping with Rites -of -Passage for Black men. Black male children are being penalized for the mistakes of their parents. Mother's bring their children to church to give them spiritual nurturing, but then, the child is marginalized in the context of the Black church. The expected outcome was for older males to become involved in designing a Rites-of-Passage program.

This research project has been rewarding for the writer. He has discovered more about himself and how to apply himself in service to the Lord. There are young men who live in single parent homes that need mentoring. The program participants who participated in the training encouraged older men in Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church to become mentors. The project participants were sensitive to many of the experiences needed to solve many of the social problems, which needed to be solved in our community. The

project participants learned that many others have the same feeling as we do, regarding the family in our society today.

The project participants learned that the men of Mount Pisgah Baptist Church are timid towards others. They saw elders that have grown during the sessions; many began to bring young men up in a Christian environment. The program participants were enlightened on the necessity of such a Rites-of-Passage program, particularly the need for such a program at Mount Pisgah Baptist Church. The program participants experienced stimulation when critical reflection was evoked, especially when the use of scripture was applied to modify behavior. The largest epiphany the program participants took from this experience was that as men, we all have a responsibility to engage, aid, and train up any young men God sends our way. They also learned that as elders, we have to sometimes push the envelope when it comes to building and fostering relationships with young men. The program participants learned that there is a lot of work to be done in the community with young men, and the time to do it is now.

The most helpful aspect of this project was the application of the Word by researching the historical, biblical, and theological foundations of the problem statement. The program participants were allowed to evaluate their lives and realize young men not raised in a home with both parents needed a male (positive) figure in their lives. The program participants felt that boys to men Rites-of-Passage program is needed to assist young boys become mature and responsible adult men; they hoped at Mount Pisgah Baptist Church, men will follow-up. The program participants enjoyed hearing the different views shared among the men, yet hearing the elders view was most helpful. The

program participants were most helpful by the opportunity to apply scriptural support for behavioral change.

The program participants felt the pedagogical instruction used to facilitate learning increased the need to engage the process. The program participants felt the most helpful aspect of this project was the in-depth Bible studies, commentary and the overall discussions. The program participants seemed to enjoy the opinions of other mature men/leaders sharing their fears as well as weaknesses.

The program participants will endeavor to develop a plan to effect young Black men so that they will have a chance to be successful in life. The program participants will reach out to a young man and offer assistance where needed. The group will remember to use the spiritual principles. They will use the discussion principles to reengage young men throughout the state while trying to be more involved in youth activities.

The program participants will look for opportunities to apply insight gained from the training to better the youth of today. A key observation was that culture has changed, and with the change has come less and less involvement of adult men in younger boys lives; at home, work, and play. This lack of involvement has been the catalyst for a lack of spiritual learning, addressing scripture and the denial of God. What has been can provide knowledge and opportunity for constructing a Rites-of-Passage program that will help boys become men on a spiritual level. The program participants will first use this experience by building more relationships with male students through Upward Bound. Next, Mount Pisgah Baptist Church will endeavor to develop a Rites-of-Passage program or just a mentoring program in general. The program participants after completion of the project have more confidence to reach out to young men as a mentor and motivator.

The program participants felt that more men (elders) should get involved and are hoping for a larger cross section of men make the program impactful and successful. This might include engaging some young people in a pilot program to encourage them to appeal to others.

APPENDIX A

PRE-TEST/POST TEST

Pre-test/Post-test

1. It is important to leave a legacy?	Y	N
2. Are friendships important for men?	Y	N
3. In general do you feel men are kind?	Y	N
4. Should men be motivated to show kindness to boys growing up in a home with no father?	Y	N
5. Are young men in the community angry?	Y	N
6. Are we responsible for some of their anger?	Y	N
7. Are there spiritual principles we can teach that will help them with their anger?	Y	N
8. Do you see character, authority, the attitude of nurture, and responsibility as spiritual principles?	Y	N
9. Do you possess these characteristics?	Y	N
10. Do you feel you can teach these characteristics to young Black males in the community?	Y	N

APPENDIX B

SURVEY

Boys to Men: Motivating Elders to Develop
Rites -of -Passage Programs for Black Males

1. What is your marital status?

- ☐ What is your marital status? Married
- ☐ Single
- ☐ Divorced

2. What is your age?

- ☐ What is your age? 18-25
- ☐ 26-40
- ☐ 41-60
- ☐ 61 and above

3. What is your Race?

- ☐ What is your Race? African-American/Black
- ☐ Hispanic
- ☐ Caucasian
- ☐ Other

4. What type of home were you raised in?

- ☐ What type of home were you raised in? Two Parent
- ☐ Single Parent
- ☐ Mother Absent
- ☐ Father Absent

5. Do you have children?

- ☐ Do you have children? Yes
- ☐ No

6. Were you ever involved with:

- ☐ Were you ever involved with: Boy Scouts
- ☐ Promise Keepers
- ☐ Boys & Girls Club

- [ ] Church Youth Ministry

7. Have you ever been mentored?

- [ ] Have you ever been mentored? Yes
- [ ] No

8. If Yes, was it helpful?

- [ ] If Yes, was it helpful? Yes
- [ ] No

9. Do you have a personal need for mentoring?

- [ ] Do you have a personal need for mentoring? Yes
- [ ] No

10. Do young Black men need male only group activities?

- [ ] Do young Black men need male only group activities? Yes
- [ ] No

11. Do young Black men need mentoring programs?

- [ ] Do young Black men need mentoring programs? Yes
- [ ] No

12. Do you think a Rites -of -Passage Program is needed in the community?

- [ ] Do you think a Rites -of -Passage Program is needed in the community? Yes
- [ ] No

13. Have you ever participated in a Rites- of -Passage Program?

- [ ] Have you ever participated in a Rites- of- Passage Program? Yes
- [ ] No

14. Would you volunteer to be involved in a Rites- of -Passage Program designed to mentor young Black males?

- [ ] Would you volunteer to be involved in a Rites- of- Passage Program designed to mentor young Black males? Yes
- [ ] No

15. If no, briefly explain why not.

If no, briefly explain why not.

16. If Yes, should the church take the leadership role in providing a Rites -of- Passage Program?

☐ If Yes, should the church take the leadership role in providing a Rites -of -Passage Program? Yes

☐ No

17. If No, briefly explain why not?

If No, briefly explain why not?

APPENDIX C

BIBLE STUDY

BIBLE STUDY SYLLABUS

Teacher: Rev. Gene B. Moore Jr.

Session 1……Character

Session 2……..Authority

Session 3……...Attitude of Nurture

Session 4……...Responsibility

Session 5……..Video Interviews

Bible Study 1 Handout
Barnabas: Character that Comes Alongside Others
Acts 4:36; 9:27-28; 11:24-30

"His real name was Joseph, but his friends called him Barnabas. His nickname meant "son of encouragement," and it is easy to see how he gained such a reputation. We first meet Barnabas in the Book of Acts after he sold some family land and placed the proceeds at the feet of the apostles in order to meet the needs of others who were part of the newly formed church (Acts 4:36). "Encouragement" in the original language carried the flavor of "to come alongside" someone. We will see that his nickname also matched his desire to come alongside a relative who had been branded a failure. He encouraged this younger man (John Mark) in order to restore him to a place of honor and service. Barnabas, with pure motives and honest actions, displayed character with integrity, which is a singleness of heart for the ways of God. Jesus called it "pure in heart" in Matthew 5:8. Godly character is based upon a pure heart. Integrity is an undivided heart in the same way an integer is indivisible-without fractions cluttering the problem. *The opposite of integrity is hypocrisy*, and in matters of character hypocrisy is the deathblow to a person's reputation and his or her present walk with God."

I. Character That Makes A Difference Displays A Heart Of Integrity And Generosity

Barnabas had a generous heart. His character reflected the giving nature of the heart of God. He also was a man of integrity when compared to the generosity of Ananias and Sapphira. Integrity is still the foundation for generosity in the church today. Why do you give to your local church or nonprofit? Is it simply for the tax break? Or, are you genuinely giving as an act of charity for those in need? Would you give if there was no governmental support for your giving? Do you give as Jesus said, "But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your hand is doing"? (Mt 6:3 TNIV).

- When this new convert showed up in Jerusalem to meet the apostles, it was Barnabas who came alongside him and vouched for his authentic faith. Barnabas told the assembly of Saul's powerful preaching in Damascus immediately after his conversion. The son of encouragement said they could trust the former persecutor to be who he said he was, and because of Barnabas' character they believed his witness Acts 9:27-28.

II. Character That Makes A Difference Sees Beyond The Fears Of Others To See People For Who They Are In Christ

Barnabas came alongside Saul of Tarsus and vouched for his authentic conversion when others doubted the sincerity of his faith. Fear clouded the judgment of the early

believers. Barnabas's relationship to God helped him see past the fear of others and come alongside Paul who would ultimately take the message of Jesus to all people groups. The next time we see Barnabas in the Book of Acts is when he encouraged the church in Antioch. The next time we see Barnabas in the Book of Acts is when he encouraged the church in Antioch.

- Luke, the writer of Acts, tells us that the *son of* encouragement intentionally traveled to Tarsus, Saul's hometown, found him, and encouraged him to come and teach the new followers of Jesus in Antioch Acts 11:25.

- Barnabas also came alongside the church in Jerusalem during a time of famine Acts 11:27-30.

- Later, after his first missionary journey with Saul, now called Paul, Barnabas with his partner in ministry described what God had done to invite non-Jewish men and women into the family of God Acts 15:12.

III. Character That Makes A Difference Encourages Believers To Use Their Skills To Meet The Needs Of Others.

Barnabas could have taken on the task himself, but his character allowed others more skilled than him to fill the need. Christ like character encourages others to become part of what God is doing to change the hearts of people.

- How did Barnabas get his heart of encouragement that comes alongside others? The Bible described Barnabas as "a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith" Acts 11:24.

- When Jesus told His disciples He was going away, He promised to send "another advocate" John 14:16. This advocate or Helper (NASB), was the Holy Spirit. The name Jesus chose to describe the Holy Spirit whom He would send literally meant to "one called alongside."

- We know from Scripture that one of the manifestations, or gifts, of the Holy Spirit in a disciple's life is "encouragement" Roman 12:8.

A CHALLENGE FOR OUR DAY

- Does your character portray a generous heart? Would others consider you a person of integrity who reflects the heart of God? How have you demonstrated the giving heart of God?

- Who have you come alongside of to take up their case in the face of fear or distrust from others?

- Who have you invited to join God where He is working? How have you encouraged others to complete tasks that you could do but would be best done by those more skilled and empowered by God to complete?[1]

Bible Study 1 Handout (Continued) John Mark: Character Makes a Comeback

John Mark-we know him as Mark-is a person God molded into a faithful servant leader, although he failed one of the best known characters of the New Testament, the Apostle Paul. John Mark is an example of how God develops character in those who allow Him to work through what may be painful and embarrassing choices.

I. Meet John Mark

- We meet Jon Mark in his home at a prayer meeting for the imprisoned Peter, the leader of the early church Acts 12:12.

- God used a godly mother, a nurturing home, the community of faith, and the Holy Spirit to mold the character of this young follower of Jesus Acts 11:27-12:25. (Read to get full story of John Mark's Early Life)

- After the death of Herod, Barnabas and Saul, who had been previously sent by the church in Antioch with a gift to help the poor in Jerusalem Acts 11:30, returned to Antioch, taking John Mark with them Acts 12:25.

- The two mentors taught him the things of God and how God's New Covenant people could expand to other communities and across all barriers. When the Holy Spirit prompted the church to set apart Barnabas and Saul for the "work to which [He had] called them," they took John Mark with them Acts 13:1-3.

II. Deserter!

As we live life, we make choices-choices that impact us in the present and future as well as choices that change how others relate to us. Character is both exposed and built when we make this life–changing choices.

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[1]Norman Blackaby and Gene Wilkes *Character the Pulse of a Disciple's Heart* (Birmingham, AL: New Hope Publishers, 2012), 163-170.

- This was true during John Mark's trip with Barnabas and Paul on the first journey to spread the message of Jesus beyond the Jewish population of Israel, taking the gospel message "to the ends of the earth" Acts 1:8.

- Would you have left? Leaving when he did does not mark a flaw in the young missionary's character. Only when we know the full story of the circumstances that led to his departure can we make a fair judgment about his character. We learn later that Paul considered Mark a deserter for leaving to go home when he did. This negative assessment of his actions could have had a devastating effect on Mark's character. While he was away from the front lines of engagement in ministry, he had time to reflect, and it gave God an opportunity to further mold his character. The time after such a rejection can be used to mold our character positively or negatively. Acts 13:4-13

III. A Rift of Biblical Proportions

How could such a thing happen between men whose character reflected the person of Christ?

- Barnabas wanted to take John Mark along with them again. Paul, now the fiery leader, refused to take John Mark with them "because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work." We have no record of the rejected missionary's response to Paul, but we know that Barnabas believed in him to the point that he separated from his long-time partner in ministry and took John Mark with him to his homeland of Cyprus. Acts 15:37-39

- Have you ever had a leader you respected no longer want to work with you? Or, have you had a leader who has stood up for you when others labeled you a failure? God uses times like these to mold your character. If you allow the assessment of others to determine your identity, you will never become the person of character God has created you in Christ Jesus to be. Whether the CEO or janitor, your identity is in Christ and that identity is the foundation upon which your character is built. The Bible reminds us we are God's adopted children in Christ Jesus and, if we are his children, we are heirs and, therefore, co-heirs with Christ Romans 8:16-17. Christ like character withstands the labels placed on our lives by others. But, we do know he did not quit serving and that he eventually reengaged with his mentor, and they were reconciled. The character of Christ grew in his heart even after he was rejected. What Paul labeled a failure, God used to mold

Mark's character into what was needed to make a lasting contribution to the work of Christ around the world and for generations to come.

IV. Reconciliation Restores the Wounded Heart

- Paul, who had labeled John Mark a deserter, came back in contact with the young Christian sometime after their separation, and the senior missionary began to partner with Mark in ministry again. We know this from how Paul addressed Mark in his letters to others. For example, from prison, Paul wrote the church in Colosse, and he sent them greetings from "Mark, the cousin of Barnabas" Colossians 4:10.

- Paul also mentioned Mark's presence with him in his short letter to Philemon Philemon v. 24. We do not know how the reconciliation took place, but Mark demonstrated God-like character if he made the initial move to go to the one who had rejected and labeled him. This act alone made it possible for the elder statesman to demonstrate God's life-changing grace in his own life. If either had kept a grudge against the other or had not demonstrated Christ-like character, these two leaders may not have ever worked together again.

- Have you ever experience biblical reconciliation? Have you made the first step toward forgiving someone who has maligned? Such gracious forgiveness and reconciliation is impossible without character like Christ. Scripture teaches us that God was pleased "through him [Christ] to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross" Colossians 1:20.

- Paul later wrote "that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them" 2 Corinthians 5:19. Those who have the character of God take the first step toward reconciliation and restoration.

- By the time Paul was imprisoned in Rome and near the end of his ministry, we read in Paul's second letter to his protégé, Timothy, "get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry" 2 Timothy 4:11. The aged missionary now labeled John Mark "helpful." From "deserter" to "helpful" marked the *character* development of this young follower of Jesus-and Paul was sending

him! Both Paul and John Mark exhibited the character of Christ in their hearts when they were reconciled after their separation. Forgiveness and reconciliation are hallmarks of Christ like character.

A Challenge for Our Day

- When have you experienced a season of life that someone else labeled as failure but God used to mold your character into His likeness? What were your initial reactions to the experience? If there has been time to reflect upon it, in what ways have you seen God use that time to change your heart toward Him and others?

- Who are the leaders in your life from whom you have received training and guidance? How have they prepared you for the service God has called you to complete?" "Have you experienced a broken relationship and restored it through Christ like reconciliation? Ask God for the strength to live out "the ministry of reconciliation" he has given you in Christ.[2]

Bible Study 1 Handout (Continued)

Paul and Timothy: Character That Leaves a Legacy

Few leadership and discipleship manuals discuss the character of the leader. We believe, however, that the leader's character is key in helping people move through the apparent chaos of leaving the past behind and pressing forward to the future. The character of the leader can help or hinder the leader's message. Faculty character can damage progress made toward God vision for a person's life. The character of the leader is where God's work in that person's life is most evident. Whether you are in a leadership position or not, your character displays itself on the stage of life. When people observe you, they should see in you-like-Paul-a humble heart, pure motives, and actions that are not self-serving. Followers will engage the mission and pursue the vision when these character traits are present in you as their leader. Businesses, schools, and communities have begun to emphasize character development as part of what they produce. Faith-based groups like character first offer training and resources in this area of personal development. It is time God's people begin to place an emphasis on character development at the church, at home, and in the world.

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:5-10
How did Paul describe his ministry among them? What did this say about his character?

I. Actions That Reveal Character
   - Paul reminded his readers that when he came to them his motives were pure. He "never used flattery," nor did he "put on a mask to

[2]Ibid. 89-98.

cover up greed." He not only shared his message, "the gospel of God," but he shared his life with them as well. He challenged them to remember "how devoutly, righteously, and blamelessly" he concluded himself among them (1 Thes 2:5,8,10).

II. Molding the Characters of Others

- We meet Timothy at the beginning of Paul's second journey into global mission field of non-Jewish peoples. Acts 16:1

- Timothy's mother (as well as his grandmother) was a follower of Jesus and an ethic Jew. His father was neither. Paul circumcised Timothy in order to make his ministry among both the Jews and Greeks more effective (2 Tim 1:3,5)

- Timothy became a trusted companion of Paul. He traveled with Paul into what is now Europe, and Paul left him with Silas in Bera to build up the church while Paul went to Athens (Acts 17:14).

- He later joined Paul in Corinth Acts 18:5, and he accompanied the senior missionary on his third missionary journey.

- Paul, for example taught his protégé not to let anyone look down on him for his youth but to be example for those in his care "in speech, in conduct in faith, in love, and in purity 1 Timothy 4:12. Character is exposed in our speech, how we act, in whom we put our trust, and whether or not our lives are pure in the things of the Lord.

- We do not want to be seen as "whitewashed tombs, which appear beautiful on the outside, but on the inside full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean" (Mt 23:27). Paul challenged Timothy to demonstrate godly character through what he said, how he acted, how he trusted God daily, and by living a pure life before others. Timothy's character, lived out before others, would not allow them to "look down on him."

III. Pure and Blameless

- Paul wrote in another letter that God's people should be "pure and blameless for the day of Christ." He acknowledged that some preach out of "envy" and rivalry." Others preach "out of false motives or true" (Phil 1:10,15,18).

- A primary tent of Paul's defense of his Character was that he vowed he did "not peddle the word of God" (2 Cor 2:17).

- He said he had "not used any of these rights," but his "boast" was to "preach the gospel and offer it free of charge" 1 Corinthians 9:12-18. Paul demonstrated a character born out of the free grace of Christ, and he refused to live in obligation to others or them to him. Take a moment to think about Paul's character. Based on the passages we have discussed and what you know of Paul's character, make a list of his most notable character traits. What claims did he make that you can make about your character? How does your character line up to these traits?

IV. The Crucible of Character

The most clear indicator of a person's character is shown by his words and actions. Character reveals itself as *consistent behavior under pressure.* Behavior is what people see, and it is the clearest indicator of your character. Hard times shape character. Hard times also expose character. Conflict and opposition in your life can create a crucible of character development.

- Paul taught from his personal experience that "affliction produce endurance," and it is endurance that produces "proven character" Romans 5:3-4. Character proven over time and tested in tough times is what produces hope in those who trust Jesus (Rom 5:5).

- He would boast in his weakness rather than his strengths because it was when he was helpless that Christ's character shone brightest through his life and ministry (2 Cor 12:10).

- He came to know that the treasure of salvation was held in fragile clay jars 2(Cor) 4:7).

- Paul asked for prayer to be bold in whatever situation he found himself, not to be released from it. Ephesians 6:19-20. This attitude reflects character dependent upon Christ, and it is a different perspective from that of those who believe God's will always include the removal of pain.

A Challenge for Our Day

- Paul claimed he walked among those he served devoutly, righteously, and blamelessly. Which of these character traits matches your walk? Who is watching your life and may be influenced by it?

- Paul molded the character of his young mentee, Timothy. Into whom are you investing your life so that he or she may serve and lead others in your absence?

- Hard times expose our true character. How have the tough experiences molded your character? Or have they wounded you so deeply you are unable to serve others?[3]

[3]Ibid., 185-193.

Bible Study 2 Handout
Timothy: Authority
Timothy 1:1-7

Spiritual Authority and an Open Heart"/Qualities Needed in Ministry

Character molded in the rough and tumble of daily faith is the basis for *spiritual authority.* Servant leaders and followers of Jesus who serve God's call on their lives and lead by serving those on mission with them exhibit mature character and discover they have authority they did not set out to gain. Authority to lead wherever God has placed you flows from a daily pursuit of God. Experiencing God in the daily thoughts, choices, and activities of the day is the path to authority for those who lead and serve. Spiritual authority flows out of character that has been influenced by the Spirit of God in a personal, daily relationship with Him.

I. Spirit of power-Instead, the Holy Spirit produces power, a reference to a forcefulness of character that can use authority boldly[4] Timothy needed power to fulfill his arduous task. (v.7)

II. Spirit of love-The Holy Spirit also produces a love that endures even the most cantankerous opposition and a self-discipline that can use restraint and oppose indulgence. This love is not so much a love that produces ministry as a love that conquers contempt and opposition by forgiveness and refusal to seek revenge. Timothy needed love to suffer gladly all opposition (v.7).

III. Spirit of self-discipline-The self-discipline refers to a wise head, which provides wise guidance for the use of power and love. "Self- controlled" controlled response as a fruit of the Holy Spirit. Timothy needed discipline, to correct and warn the wayward and careless. (v. 7)

IV. In conclusion Paul mentions three characteristics of the effective Christian leader; power, love, and self-discipline. These are available to us because the Holy Spirit lives in us. Power, love, and self-discipline are not commodities; they are attitudes and actions. They must be exercised by the individual. But to the extent that the motivation and the will to exercise them are weak or lacking, these must come from God.[5] When we allow people to intimidate us, we neutralize our effectiveness for God. The

[4]J. N. D. Kelley defines this power as an ability "enabling them to dominate any situation with moral authority" (*A Commentary on Pastoral Epistles* 1963; reprint, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1981, 160).

[5]Walter L. Liefeld, *The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999), 227.

power of the Holy Spirit can help us overcome our fear of what some might say or do to us, so that we can continue to do God's work.

Spiritual Principles

- Power-Self- Determination/To define ourselves, name ourselves, create for ourselves, and speak for ourselves instead of being defined, named, created for, and spoken for by other. Power is defining one's reality and having it accepted by others.[6]

- Vulnerability- Character based on such openness is transparent vulnerable and willing to step into the world of those who are hurting.

- Confidentially- What information must be kept confidential?

A Challenge for Our Day

- Hard times expose our true moral authority. How have the tough experiences molded your moral authority? Or have they wounded you so deeply you are unable to serve others?[7]

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[6]Paul Hill, Jr., *Coming of Age African American Male Rites-Of-Passage* (Chicago, IL: African American Images: 1992), 70-71.

[7]Ibid., 191-193.

Bible Study 3 Handout
John Mark: Character Makes a Comeback/Attitude of Nurture
Ephesians 6:4

John Mark-we know him as Mark-is a person God molded into a faithful servant leader, although he failed one of the best known characters of the New Testament, the Apostle Paul. John Mark is an example of how God develops character in those who allow Him to work through what may be painful and embarrassing choices. God used a godly mother, a nurturing home, the community of faith, and the Holy Spirit to mold the character of this young follower of Jesus. NURTURE KJV translation (Eph 6:4) of the Greek *paideia* (disciple, instruction). The noun occurs elsewhere in the Pauline corpus only once (2 Tim 3:16) which relates that all Scripture is profitable for "training (*paideia*) in righteousness." To bring up children "in the training and instruction of the Lord" (Eph 6:4 HCSB) is to discipline and correct them as the Lord would.[8]

4. fathers—including *mothers;* the fathers are specified as being the fountains of domestic authority. Fathers are more prone to passion in relation to their children than mothers, whose fault is rather over-indulgence.

provoke not—irritate not, by vexatious commands, unreasonable blame, and uncertain temper [ALFORD]. Col 3:21, "lest they be discouraged."

nurture—*Greek,* "discipline," namely, *training* by chastening in *act* where needed (Job 5:17; Heb 12:7).

admonition—training by *words* (De 6:7; "catechise," Pr 22:6, *Margin*), whether of encouragement, or remonstrance, or reproof, according as is required [TRENCH]. Contrast 1Sa 3:13, *Margin.*of the Lord—such as the Lord approves, and by His Spirit dictates.[9]

Meet John Mark

- We meet John Mark in his home at a prayer meeting for the imprisoned Peter, the leader of the early church "When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying" (Acts 12:12 NIV). John Mark, mentioned here in passing, was the author of the Gospel of Mark and became an important character on the first journey of Paul (see 13:5,

[8]C. Brand, C. Draper, A. England, S. Bond, E. R. Clendenen & T. C. Butler (Eds.), *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), 1201.

[9]Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D., *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

13; 15:37-39).[10] John Mark's mother, Mary, was a member of the Jerusalem church. John Mark's home was where he gained firsthand experience of the power of God through prayer. John Mark grew up in a home built upon the teachings of God. He grew up learning scripture and practicing the ways of God. When you go before God, you need to show an ID. When you go to the airport, and they say, "Show me your ID," it's because they want you to verify that you are who you say you are. You need an ID in order to go through security and to go back to the gate area. The ID grants you access because it shows you are authorized to go into a secured area. The Father always authorizes the children of God who carry His ID with his name. We must pray based on the authority of the name of Jesus Christ. The prayers of the group of believers were answered even as they prayed. But when the answer arrived at the door, they didn't believe. When you pray, trust that you'll get an answer. And when the answer comes, don't be surprised. Instead, be thankful![11]

- God used a godly mother, a nurturing home, the community of faith, and the Holy Spirit to mold the character of this young follower of Jesus Acts 11:27-12:25. (Read to get full story of John Mark's Early Life)

- After the death of Herod, Barnabas and Saul, who had been previously sent by the church in Antioch with a gift to help the poor in Jerusalem Acts 11:30, returned to Antioch, taking John Mark with them " When Barnabas and Saul had finished their mission in Jerusalem, they returned to Antioch, taking John Mark with them" (Acts 12:25 NLT). During his trip to Antioch, he came under the tutelage of the two prominent leaders of the early church. John Mark had heard of the explosive growth of the new church in Antioch, and he was about to experience it for himself. Upon the completion of their mission, Barnabas and Saul *returned to Antioch*, having picked up *John Mark* in the process. John Mark was also Barnabas's cousin (Col 4:10). His mother, Mary, often would open her home to the church (12:12), so John Mark would have been exposed to most of the great teachers and teachings of the early church. He had become a believer and had the great opportunity to travel with these two men of God. It would be the education of a lifetime, but not in the ways

[10]Grant Osborne and Philip W. Comfort, *Life Application Bible Commentary: Acts* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1999), 208.

[11]Tony Evans, *Tony Evan's Book of Illustrations* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2009), 237.

he expected.[12] Parent Are a child's escort through life. We have, in our culture, approximately eighteen years to escort our children to safely into their own way, like a police escort that escorts specially designated travelers through traffic. Parents are to escort their children through life, safely, during the time that we have responsibility for them.[13]

- The two mentors taught him the things of God and how God's New Covenant people could expand to other communities and across all barriers. When the Holy Spirit prompted the church to set apart Barnabas and Saul for the "work to which [He had] called them," they took John Mark with them Acts 13:1-3. There can be little doubt that John Mark's time spent with Paul and Barnabas made a huge impact on his character development. Their teaching, example, and passion for Christ allowed him to grow in his trust and understanding of Jesus and His call on his life. Simply sitting under Apostle Paul's teaching for over a year gave him insights into scripture and the ways of God few others had experienced. Barnabas, with his encouraging spirit and open heart to the things of God, showed Mark the ways of God among the unique gathering of the church in Antioch.

In Conclusion the Key to Right Parent-Child Relationships

Dr. Paul D. Meier (Christian Child-Rearing and Personality Development, 81–82) sums up the key to right parent-child relationships in five things.

1. Love

   Parents should have genuine love for each other and for their children.

2. Discipline

3. Consistency

   Both parents should stick together, using the same rules and consistently enforcing those rules so that what a child gets away with on some occasions is not the cause for which he is capriciously punished at another time.

4. An example

   In healthy families, the parents don't expect the children to live up to standards they themselves don't keep. Parents should expect their children to live up to the standards they themselves observe.

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[12]Ibid., 212.

[13]Ibid., 218.

5. A man at the head of the home

   The vast majority of neurotics, both children and adults, grew up in homes where there was no father or the father was absent or weak, and the mother was domineering.

What Meier is saying is that you must have the right role of both the father and the mother in order to insure the child's success in fulfilling God's pattern.[14]

A Challenge for Our Day

- When have you experienced a season of life that someone else labeled as failure but God used to mold your character into His likeness? What were your initial reactions to the experience? If there has been time to reflect upon it, in what ways have you seen God use that time to change your heart toward Him and others?

- Who are the leaders in your life from whom you have received training and guidance? How have they prepared you for the service God has called you to complete? Have you experienced a broken relationship and restored it through Christ like reconciliation? Ask God for the strength to live out the ministry of reconciliation" he has given you in Christ.[15]

[14]J. F., MacArthur Jr., *The Fulfilled Family* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1981).

[15]Ibid., 89-98.

Bible Study 4 Handout
God's System of Responsibility: The Single Parent, The Family, The Church
2 Timothy 1:5; 1 Timothy 5:4, 8, 16

Now I want to turn to a crucial area, which is the system God has put in place to help us deal with situations such as single-parent families and single women in particular who have no one to care for them. God has given all of us spheres of responsibility. Our marital or family status does not excuse us from carrying out our God-assigned responsibilities, because in His economy, or way of ordering life, God always starts with personal responsibility. What is my responsibility under God? Once we understand that, we can move out in concentric circles to the broader contexts of the responsibilities God has assigned to the family, the church, and society.

Did you know that Paul's spiritual son Timothy was the product of a single-parent home, as far as we can determine? If Timothy's father was not physically absent, he was at least spiritually absent, for the faith Timothy had was the result of his godly mother and grandmother (2 Tim 1:5). Even if there is not a godly man in your home, God can take up the slack. How could Timothy become a man of God when he did not have a male influence in his life? But at the right time God gave Timothy a Paul, a godly father figure and example, somebody who would give the male influence he needed at the time he needed it.

What about the family of the single parent? I would say there's a good chance that you have a single parent somewhere in your extended family. The statistics alone make that a pretty safe assumption. Scripture has a lot to say about the responsibility a family bears to its single parents and widows (1 Tim 5:4, 8, 16).

The church's responsibility to single parents and older widows is outlined in 1Timothy 5:16. The church is an extended family. The Greek word for church means a "called-out people." So the church has the responsibility to care for the orphan and widow as part of God's extended family. Another important ministry we are thoroughly committed to is providing spiritual role models for those who are missing them at home. We have men investing their time in boys who don't have fathers. We have spiritual mentoring taking place on a number of levels because we believe it is vital for the church as an extended family to take up the slack. And I strongly encourage single parents to challenge their church to start a mentoring program.[16]

[16]Tony Evans, *Speaks Out on Single Parenting* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1995), 25-40.

APPENDIX D

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR MOUNT PISGAH BAPTIST CHURCH

MOUNT PISGAH CHURCH
WORD, WORSHIP, WORK, AND WITNESS
STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY

I. Vision and Mission

Vision Statement
The Mount Pisgah Church, Where the Word is at Work.

TMPC Mission Statement

The Mt. Pisgah Church is a word-centered ministry where Christ is exalted and the Word of God is explained—and we love to worship and praise God. We believe that we are anointed, spiritually gifted, and divinely favored to manifest the purpose God has ordained for our lives. We are a church that believes in hospitality and we will receive anyone that walks through our doors with care and compassion. We believe that sacrificial giving enables life-changing ministry and supports the vision that ministers to the total person. We believe that we are a royal priesthood and a chosen generation; and because of Christ, failure is not an option.

II. Ministry Strategic Goals:

The following ministry strategic goals identify the top-level direction for Mount Pisgah Church to the Year 2015. These priorities taken as a whole represent the one-page strategic plan for the future. Each of the following ministries strategic goals will be supported by a set of ministry objectives and initiatives and ministry action plans for implementation over the next five years.

A) Word
Make the Gospel our first language, growing our capacity and our means of Christian education to all ages with relevant, consistent, and clear communication of the Gospel and its transformation of life.

B) Worship
Acknowledge a sense of "always" in submission to God through free and spiritually-driven worship with one voice.

C) Work
Spiritually engage members to fully utilize and realize our gifts as members and leaders, embracing the commission that service is a shared responsibility within and beyond our congregation.

D) Witness
Share the inward and outward transformation of our members beyond the congregation, serving diverse children, families, youth, and young adults impacting those who can most benefit from a pure, but imperfect witness.

E) Community
Include all our members and stakeholders in a sense of common ownership of our vision, growing the kingdom through and within our core competencies.

F) Sustainability and Stewardship
Prepare our members as stewards of our ministries and our principles of kingdom stewardship that through our giving we are able to reach those in need and sustain our work and ministry.

III. Ministry Objectives and Initiatives:

The following ministry objectives and initiatives represent the major benchmarks of success to be achieved in implementing the strategic plan for Mount Pisgah Church to the Year 2015. These objectives and initiatives indicate major priorities to be fully developed and documented in the action plan for implementation over the next several years.

A) Word

1. Expand our capacity for online and traditional Christian education classes.

2. Develop an age-appropriate curriculum of systematic foundational courses.

3. Build a social networking process to reach youth and young adults.

4. Provide age-appropriate language and images in the Christian education of young children.

5. Build a relationship with a Bible College which leads to our own offering.

6. Reinforce the application of Christian education in home settings with parents and guardians.

7. Foster a commitment to personal and congregational prayer.

8. Develop a youth mentoring process.

B) Worship

1. Assure a consistent message and worship experience in all services and sites.

2. Provide authentic worship relevant to the lives of people which respect the diverse experiences of how people have been formed in their prior experiences.

3. Develop pre- and post-worship ministries of welcome and hospitality.

4. Adapt the diversity of our worship to the future diversity of our congregation (i.e., Spanish, cultural symbols, listening devices). (Pulpit)

5. Create and affirm joint worship services across different sites.

6. Develop our worship ministries for multiple sites and a growing congregation.

7. Strategically utilize technology within our worship and programs.

8. Train lay pastors to share in the work of the altar.

C) Work

1. Train our staff to enable the spiritual, vocational, and professional gifts of others.

2. Develop a skills and talents assessment of the members and a process to ensure their involvement.

3. Provide meaningful opportunities for members to serve and volunteer.

4. Develop and expand our organizational model of deacons, elders, staff, and members.

5. Develop a model for members to share resources and everyday services and skills.

6. Train and establish our leadership core for the entire church and each site (i.e., Senior Saints).

D) Witness

1. Consistently capture the "Easter Spirit" throughout the year.

2. Develop a marketing plan for the church.

3. Determine a radical community cause that we consistently champion.

4. Reach out to diverse cultures and ethnicity in our community.

5. Develop an outreach to visitors and guests to know their needs and interests.

6. Expand our use of internet surveys to understand member and prospective member needs.

7. Develop a system of podcasts and multi-media applications for sermons.

8. Provide weekly assignments or life applications from Sunday lessons for the rest of the week.

9. Videotape and edit key elements of congregational planning to educate members.

E) Community

1. Develop a "C-3" ministry of community, collaboration, and commerce with a mechanism to implement and evaluate.

2. Continue and expand our "Sheep of the Shepherd" community outreach.

3. Develop a Mount Pisgah Home Improvement Initiative.

4. Fully develop our second worship site in Huber Heights and beyond.

5. Develop a member-led network for disaster relief and support.

6. Continue to develop our children, youth, and teens ministry.

7. Develop multiple income streams, such as before and after school care.

8. Strengthen our ability to tell the history of Mount Pisgah.

9. Focus on building a young professional adult outreach ministry.

10. Develop our outreach to our community members, including single parents, divorced, widowed, and seniors.

11. Expand engagement with WPAFB.

F) Sustainability and Stewardship

1. Develop classes for members and the wider community on financial planning and stewardship.

2. Create a legacy giving process, such as an endowment and foundation.

3. Create the capacity for online giving.

4. Create the emerging legal business model for the church. (pulpit)

5. Increase the capacity of the congregation to tithe.

6. Develop a specific model and committee to oversee community partnerships.

7. Develop our inventory of core competencies.

IV. Future Performance Indicators:

The following future performance indicators represent the specific metrics of success tomeasure the impact and value of Mount Pisgah Church over the next five years.

1. A minimum of 75% of active members attending and serving at each thriving worship site.

2. A full Christian education curriculum serving all members with 60% participating.

3. A multi-cultural presence in our worship within five years with at least three cultures represented.

4. At least four joint services together per year across all sites.

5. 90% of members contributing time and talent to ministry life beyond Sunday service within five years with 20% growth each year toward that goal.

6. An established ministry formation process for members and leaders in place within two years.

7. A digital media ministry in place within two years.

8. Six institutionalized outreach ministries to diverse populations through various means in place within five years.

9. A "C-3" ministry model and implementation in place for community, collaboration, and commerce.

10. Expansion of our giving units to at least 60% of the congregation within five years.

11. A financial planning process in place within two years.

V. Ministry Action Plans:

1. Build upon current Face book pages for CYT, TMPC, and College of Young Professionals making them more interesting for youth.

2. Conduct a class on prayer every 5th Sunday at TMPC with a sermon focused on prayer.
• Word Team
• Prayer Leaders

3. Implement a prayer partners "Just the Two of Us" program providing adult members with a senior member as a partner in prayer.

4. Every first Sunday, conduct a prayer group before worship and after Sunday School.

5. Conduct a prayer service before Wednesday Bible Studies in the morning and evening.

6. Develop a mentoring process as an expansion of the CYT and NICE Ministries, including:
• Recruitment of mentors from existing ministries
• Training of mentors
• Screening of mentors
• Matching of mentors

• Monthly outings (CYT Ministry)
• Parent Involvement

• CYT Ministry Volunteers

• Mentoring Team

7. Implement a plan for foundational courses emphasizing the basics of the faith through a systematic curriculum. This will build on the new members' class.

8. Ask Christian education teachers to provide parents with a "Topics to Discuss with your Child" worksheet each quarter. Reinforce weekly themes with posted reminders in the church. Conduct parent teacher conferences every month.

9. Develop a relationship with United Theological Seminary or a Bible College to offer online courses to our members. Phase I would be accessing their courses. Phase II would involve TMPC courses delivered on their technology platform.

10. Expand the TMPC Christian Education Curriculum to include age appropriate language and images for our youth.

1. Fully implement "The Planning Center Tool" to coordinate weekly worship among Worship and Arts Team members.

2. Include different types of music, such as hymns into the weekly morning services.

3. Conduct an assessment of all sound equipment in the church with a central and more integrated sound control set-up for each worship site.

4. Convene a monthly meeting of Pastor Bryant, Lay Pastors, and the Worship Team to align scripture references with music for each week.

5. Develop pre- and post-worship ministries of welcome and hospitality through:
• A consistent order and system of pre-worship preparation.
• Usher hospitality appropriate for each site.

6. Develop separate band and separate worship teams for each site of Diamond Avenue and Huber Heights.

7. The Pastor will take the lead in scheduling joint worship across the two sites at appropriate times and seasons.

8. The ministerial staff will implement the training of lay pastors to be part of the altar ministry for each worship site. (This could take the form of an altar workers class.)

9. Research conferences and materials to expand experiences, repertoire, and view points on diversity in worship, including different languages, cultural symbols, and physical adaptations. This is likely to be introduced in the Huber Heights worship site first.

1. Based on TMPC criteria, determine an appropriate leadership assessment of the skills of TMPC leaders and members. It is extremely important to determine what type of assessment criteria we want to capture for our ministries and church vision. Use the existing tool as a reference to obtain the information TMPC needs to manifest the vision and strategic plan. Study the tools on the market to identify the best fit for TMPC. Tool data must be in a searchable database that is simple to use and administer. Assure that the tool has online capabilities.

2. Based on a selected skills assessment, train leaders of the church to understand and use their personal, organizational, business and spiritual gifts for TMPC.

3. Based on assessment results with senior leaders, roll out the assessment to new members and restructure our existing intake process for new members to engage them in TMPC by understanding and focusing on their gifts. Re-image the new members' class to include more TMPC doctrine, articles of Christianity, worship at TMPC, introduction to Vision and Strategic Plan, Gifts assessment, skills assessment and ministry introduction. The new members' class may need to be extended beyond 4 Sundays. The assigned Family ministry should meet the new member once during the new member process. Also, at the conclusion of the process announce to the church all new members for that month.

4. Re-engage/continue the new member's introduction to all active TMPC ministries. Expand the effort to include the talent assessment.

5. Develop a process to train all members through the Elders, Deacons and Ministry Leaders utilizing the talent assessment database to involve members in thelife of TMPC. One of the core reasons to use the tool is to provide the congregation with entrance ramps into TMPC.

6. For members not reached by the Deacon Family Ministry, reach out to them individually through the Hospitality Ministry for participation in the assessment process.

7. After completing the assessment and training of members, each TMPC ministry will define skills and talents needed and utilize the talent Data base to recruit members to serve in each ministry. This is another touch point for the ministries to engage the congregation.

8. For "corporate initiatives" (i.e., from the C3 ministry), utilize the talents of our members to engage them in these works and special projects.

9. Based on the strategic plan and expected growth in the congregation, conduct leadership training for trustees, deacons, elders, and ministry leaders to equip them to support growth in the congregation and ministries. Also provide additional, more intensive training to this select group in each area represented in the strategic plan (i.e., one training session for work, witness, word, and worship).Can industry experts or contacts be derived from the congregation's skills determined by the assessment?

1. Expand the membership on the Witness Team to strengthen the role of the community as not only "Being Blessed", but called to be "Blessors" of others.

2. Develop a marketing plan for TMPC, including internal priorities:
• Improved system of announcements
• Mailings to members
• E-mail/phone blasts(monthly)
• Short video clips of events

3. Work with "Sheep of the Shepherds" (SOS) to recommend one high priority community need for TMPC involvement.
• Witness Team
• Pastor
• SOS Ministry
• Trustees

4. Develop a plan to engage the congregation in the TMPC community ministry.
• SOS Ministry

5. Develop a "remnant" of people involved in the strategic plan to visit Mt. Zion Church in Nashville to learn their practices in engaging the congregation in ministry.

6. Identify members of TMPC who will develop a system of podcasts for weekly sermons and lessons working with the pastor.

7. Expand the TMPC marketing plan to include external communications:
• Daily papers and weekly papers
• WPAFB newspaper
• TV spots
• Radio (WROU, WDAO,WXCJ, WCSU)
• Access TV Team
• Pastor
• Audio/Visual Ministry

8. Recruit volunteers from our college students to videotape key events and ministry opportunities to videotape for use by members and prospective members.

9. Explore the potential of a TMPC newsletter or quarterly magazine, perhaps working with a company specializing in church publications and advertising.

10. Based on the Mt. Zion experience, convene an annual TMPC Ministry Summit to review progress and update priorities for the strategic plan and member involvement.

11. Expand the podcast outreach by providing weekly activities and reflections which are part of the podcast or "Twitter feeds". Provide a print version on Sundays as well.

12. Work with Sr. Maria Stacey at St. Mary Community Outreach Ministry to the Hispanic community. Develop a series of neighborhood "dialogues" among small groups of leaders on common concerns.

1. Continue to grow our outreach and develop our second worship site in Huber Heights. Extend the "SOS" ministry and "C-3" ministry to Huber Heights based on member needs.

2. Continue the development of a" supplemental educational services cooperative" to expand tutoring to help children with special needs. Receive state certifications and licensure of tutors.

3. Complete plans for a TMPC"CDC" community development corporation as an umbrella for community improvement projects.

4. Build a leadership team to continue the development of the young adult ministry program at TMPC, including socialization, Bible study, community service, devotion, and TMPC.

5. Grow members in the "Sheep of the Shepherd" outreach identifying members in the talent survey interested in outreach beyond TMPC.

6. Collaborate with "Work" Team to develop and implement a skill assessment model to determine skill levels and expertise in our congregation to serve in the "C-3" ministry.

7. Set up online and print directory of member skills and talents to support other members and share their skills. This will result in a TMPC home improvement initiative.

8. Conduct a family needs survey to identify member needs for support from other TMPC members through the "C-3"ministry.

9. Present a TMPC disaster planning guide and team concept to the administration and pastor for approval. Once approved, establish a budget and support team to establish TMPC disaster relief program.

10. Identify key points of contact at WPAFB to share information about TMPC with new employees locating to our community. Publish information on TMPC in the WPAFB Skywriter and Huber Heights Courier. Involve TMPC members who have contacts at WPAFB as ambassadors to offer to help support ministries of the Base Chapels.

11. Formalize a book on the history of TMPC for distribution to members. Create a CD visual and oral presentation to accompany the book.

12. Develop a quarterly night out program for parents, singles, and seniors. Various TMPC ministries could sponsor each quarterly gathering.

13. Study the potential for a preschool or after school program to be located at the Huber Heights campus.

1. Add a class to new member orientation on Christian stewardship encouraging wholistic giving and tithing (time, talent, treasure).

2. Based upon key strategic plan initiatives and outreach projects, evaluate the potential for creating a community development corporation toadminister those initiatives, collect fees, and receive grants and public funds. This could also provide support for C-3ministry.

3. Continue "financial boot camp" for six sessions for church members and the community to educate members on biblical finances and everyday finances. Repeat every six months. Incorporate a version of these lessons into the CYP and CYT Ministry.

4. Expand the website to include a capacity for online giving working with a preferred vendor. The service will need a secure link.

5. Evaluate potential models of legacy giving programs to encourage members to consider TMPC as a beneficiary of their estate. This may be done by learning about The Dayton Foundation program.

6. Based on the business model chosen (i.e., a "CDC"), develop our C-3 ministry structure to lead our community collaborations and initiatives. This should include a leadership and volunteer management system.

7. In conjunction with the pastor and the pulpit, invite a "tithing member" of the community to give a witness presentation on their blessings and gratitude once per quarter at the Sunday service.

8. In cooperation with the "Work" Ministry Team, utilize the member skill and talent assessment results to define and refine our core competencies as a congregation and encourage the stewardship of giving time to the church and others.

9. Based upon the evaluation period, establish a TMPC Legacy Giving Program and team to lead these efforts and to educate the congregation on the potential.

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